

LITTLE REVIEWS ANTHOLOGY 1949

Edited by
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Introduction

THIS is a period of uncertainty for the serious writer—so also for the literary reviews which serve as his principle testing ground and experimental media. During the 1939–45 war there was a ‘boom’ in little reviews. The pronounced trend towards centralization stimulated writers and artists into organizing new outlets for their work and opinions. The restrictions on book publishing and the general limitations upon writers’ spare time contributed to focus attention on shorter works. Many of these were first published in little reviews—for example, the short stories of William Sansom, J. MacLaren Ross and Diana Gardner; the provocative essays of George Orwell, Alex Comfort and V. S. Pritchett; the poetry of Alun Lewis, Sydney Keyes and George Barker. There were other interesting trends: the increasing space given to work of overseas writers, the extensive encouragement of the short story, the turning away from London towards regional revivals.

Since the war there has been a slowing up and sometimes a reversal of the previous progress. Despite the fact that it is technically easier now to bring out new reviews than during the war, there are probably fewer literary magazines today than in, say, 1944. A number of reviews of high quality, such as the *Bell*, *Selected Writing*, *Now*, *Polemic*, *Writing Today*, *Irish Harvest* and *Transformation*, have ceased publication. The most hard-hit appear to have been the various short story collections. After the great public interest shown in short stories during the war it seems depressing that things are as they were. Publishers are now a good deal less willing to consider a book of short stories than they were two or three years ago. Collections and magazines of what may be termed philosophical purpose—i.e. those reflecting the Apocalyptic movement—have also suffered recently. On the other hand, the revival of interest in poetry seems to have strengthened (possibly encouraged by increasing B.B.C. attention)—and is reflected in the steady expansion of *Poetry Quarterly*, the re-organization and improvement of *Poetry*

Review, the resumption of *Poetry London*, and the appearance of new poetry magazines, such as *Poetry Ireland* and *Verse*.

But perhaps the most positive trend among present day literary magazines has been the move towards regionalism. The appearance of so many new regional reviews, a parallel to the widespread development of local repertory theatres, can only have the most beneficial results on the life and peoples of Britain. For it means that instead of taking everything as it is dished out from London, people are creating their own arts and activities. Thus the whole country's culture grows upon a solid basis, with roots spread evenly.

In Wales the regional trend is strongly focalized in two literary papers, *Wales* and *Welsh Review*¹ which are probably as high in quality as any review today published. The work of many promising new Scottish writers has been published in *Scottish Art and Letters* and *Poetry Scotland*. And in Ireland there has been great vitality among the contributions in *Irish Writing*, *Dublin Magazine* and *Bell* (now temporarily closed down). Meanwhile, some of the most significant new developments have taken place in England, with the appearance of the *West Country Magazine*, *Facet*, 'the arts magazine of the West' (Bristol), *Northern Review* (Leeds), *Writers of the Midlands* (Birmingham), *Nowadays* (Brighton), *Portsmouth Quarterly*, *The Cornish Review*, *Exe* (organ of Exeter University Literary Club), and others. Through regional reviews such as this, and through ventures such as the West Country Library and the Scottish Poetry Series, positive aid is being given to local writers who might otherwise not fulfil themselves for lack of just that practical encouragement.

This regional trend will be noticeable in the contents of this, the fifth of the annual editions of the *Little Reviews Anthology*. At the same time, it is hoped that the stories and poetry and criticism give a fair general picture of the modern British literary scene. I should like to emphasize, as I have done in previous editions, that the purpose of this anthology is not only to present a cross-section of modern writing, but also to draw

¹ Unfortunately the *Welsh Review* has now ceased.

increasing public attention to literary magazines and the services they render. For this reason I would particularly draw the reader's attention to the extensive bibliography at the end of this book.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that owing to present-day production difficulties there has been a considerable time-lag between completion of this anthology and its actual publication. If, owing to this factor, any details about particular magazines have become inaccurate, I can only plead circumstances beyond my editorial control. To the editors of all publications represented I extend, once again, warm thanks for their co-operation. In particular I should like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Robert Greacen in providing much useful information about Irish literary magazines.

THE EDITOR

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LITTLE REVIEWS ANTHOLOGY

1949

Stories

The Pot of Gold at Fear's End

GWYN THOMAS

MOST of the outcrops driven into the mountainside by the men in their search for free coal were level workings, driven straight in. Not so the working of Naboth Kinsey. Naboth's enterprise was in a narrow cleft of the hillside and not much noticed. This suited Naboth for he was an obstinate, secretive man, not given to the long idle arguments about method that were loved by most of the outcrop workers, especially my father, who was a noted theorist, so noted he had already been thrown out of my brother Dan's outcrop for being a nuisance and holding up the work. So it was with great interest we heard that my father had been taken on as an auxiliary at the working of Naboth Kinsey. Everyone said my father and Naboth would get on very well, as well as a busy flame in a deep petroleum well.

Naboth had scorned the level working adopted by most of his comrades. He believed in going down as perpendicularly as he could to contact the seams worked in the pits themselves. When it was suggested to Naboth that this might take a long time, he would take off his cap, play with his fingers on the top of his bald head and say he did not feel rushed. He had lived for long enough in the neighbourhood of mountains to know that it saves a lot of burns on the inside of the skull to dim the light of

immediate thoughts by dipping them into some shadowed apprehension of the everlasting. If you were going to do a job said Naboth, be thorough. So he went on with his perpendicular digging. Some said he would reach coal about fifty years after the coming of the New Jerusalem and by then he would have got so far down he would not be able to hear what the voters were saying who were telling him that there was no longer any need for so much digging. Others said he would probably strike a layer of salt and end up talking about vinegar with Lot's wife. But the majority simply held that one day Naboth and his companions would go down and find it too much trouble to haul themselves back up again. So, when it was announced that my father was teaming up with Naboth there were quite as many people to feel sorry for my father as felt sorry for Naboth. In the latter camp, my brother Dan was a kind of president.

During his first few days with Naboth my father was full of enthusiasm.

'You're like me, boy,' he told Naboth. 'You've got a feeling for where the seams are. Me too. To us it's simple. The coal is somewhere underneath us, so down we go, straight as a plummet. That's a fine deep hole you've got there, Naboth. It's straight, boy, and it's deep. You didn't waste your plummet there. Perhaps it's a little too deep from one point of view but there we are. The seams are down there and we are the boys who go straight at them. No messing. When do you think you'll hit the main seam, Nabe?'

'There's no hurry, Eli. We'll take it nice and steady.'

'That's the right spirit. That's the talk I like to hear. There are chaps working on this mountain who'd spit their hearts up with grief if they couldn't have a certain amount of coal in their hands every day. The romance of this antic doesn't seem to appeal to them at all. There's a lot of beauty that they don't see in just making a hole. God knows where we'll get to before we finish going straight down like this. They say the inside of the earth is just like the pan in a chip shop. You know those pans, Naboth, bubbling all the time. It would be a good idea if we got to that heat before we get to the seam, to take some potatoes down and

do our own chips and cook them on the lava or whatever it is that does this bubbling.'

'We'll take it steady,' said Naboth. 'There's no hurry.' Not even the thought of chips which was the favourite food of the valley could stir this Naboth from his calm. It struck us that this man was a digger strictly for the sake of digging. Ends seemed to matter to him not at all and he would probably have started digging this hole in the bedroom floor if he did not have a wife and a bed that needed holding up.

To us, Naboth's little pit was every bit as dangerous as the level working of my brother Dan and if my father, with his quick eye for danger of all sorts, had not noticed this, we were sure it was only because he was still keen to show Dan what a way he had with him in this matter of tracking down seams; either that, or the swift, passionate flight of his own desires found something to detain and fascinate them in the serene, objectless methods of Naboth. Naboth's companions, Windsor Ellis and Elias Thompson, were like Naboth, quiet, sad-looking men who went about their work without any zest or relish as if glad that at least they were in no doubt that one day soon the whole issue would cave in around the whole pack of them ridding them, without fuss or expense, of air and trouble. The gear they had rigged up to get the diggers in and out of the hole looked most insecure. A bucket on a rope was let down from a cross bar. The digger got into the bucket and his two colleagues, three counting my father, took the strain on the rope. The earth was loaded into the bucket, hauled up by one man and emptied by the third. Windsor, whose moods, cradled in as mossy a nest of life-long mishaps as the valley could show, often took a bitter turn, regarded my father as frivolous and treated him with caution, especially if my father was anywhere near the rope and it was his, Windsor's, turn to go down into the diggings. But with Elias Thompson my father had much better luck. Elias was a man who had spent his whole life dominated by a woman of narrow religious tendency who had converted their bedroom into a centre meet only for prayer and bleak decency, numb with deep solitude and fitting texts. From this chaste cranny Elias peeped

out at my father and found him to be, by his standards, a king of the goats and he looked upon his most harmless remark as a sin-soaked novelty to be stored away in some mental cupboard where not even his wife's probing life-hatred could pry. Later, it would be taken out to warm the frozen fragment of some thoughtful night.

My father's close friend Waldo Treharne, was depressed by the venture. Every time he looked at Naboth's pit-head gear with its rope and bucket we could see his mind painting a frame of doom around them as the shadow fell across his thoughts. It was clear that in terms of calamity he viewed Naboth's whole outfit as a fitting pendant to the bodily trouble, a hernia, which kept him idle.

'It was a bad step teaming up with Naboth,' he told my father. 'After one week of this, Eli, you will be praying to be back with the ponies.' My father in normal times was a stableman in the pit and of no great skill at this trade being stamped on and kicked as often as the floor by the little horses with which he had been trying for twenty years to come to some sort of understanding. 'It wouldn't surprise me,' went on Waldo, 'to find that Naboth is in league with Richards the Undertaker. I bet Richards calls on Naboth nightly to ask him when he can expect the big coop. Come to think of it, I saw Richards last night lurking by the door of the Library and Institute keeping an eye on you. Taking a rough measurement, no doubt. It would be more honest by a mile if Naboth threw aside all such dishonest tomfoolery as that bucket and tied the rope direct around your necks.'

'Waldo,' said my father very gently, 'your view is darkened by that trouble of yours, the hernia. It's pulled all your hope and joy clean out of shape. Naboth is a man to watch.'

'I'll do that, Eli. He won't be around to watch for very long. Nor you.'

Naboth kept my father out of the hole for several days and put him on the rope with Elias. This labour half killed my father who had done little in the past more strenuous than warding off the ponies and picking himself up when he couldn't.

But he began to ache furiously from the strain of pulling the rope tight when Naboth or Windsor went down and his face went red as a sunset when it came time to haul them back up again. After his first day on the rope his body seemed to become fixed in the posture of rope-tugging and he walked as if he were being carried on a chair, his legs bent forward and his spine bent backward almost parallel with the ground. We followed him and Waldo home and it was very interesting to see my father performing this Chinese bend and Waldo leaning as far forward as my father leaned back. They had to keep adjusting their step to be able to talk to each other at all.

Later that same evening, my father did what he always did when he found that life had once again put its foot upon his neck. He went to the Workmen's Library in search of a book that would provide him with an answer to this animal labour he was called upon to do at Naboth's hole. He found it. It was called *Through Breathing, Strength*. He brought it home excitedly, still followed by Waldo with a look of even deeper wonder in his eye. He stayed up reading it far into the night. Our bedroom was directly above the kitchen where he read. Off and on, we could hear a sound like that of a man drawing his shoe sharply across rough matting. That was my father filling up with breath. Then there would be ten minutes of coughing, choking, stumbling and swearing. That would be my father trying to rid himself quickly of breath that had got into parts of his body where breath had no right to be and where breath had never been before.

But the next morning he seemed cheerful and confident and we heard him tell Waldo on the way up to the outcrops that he had taken in enough of this breath doctrine to make a trial trip and that, in confidence, he now thought that most of Naboth's troubles were over.

'There are two ways of taking that, Eli,' said Waldo.

At the first opportunity my father took Elias aside and explained to him the advantages of this new system of taking the load off the muscles and putting it on the lungs. It took my father a long time and a few rough drawings to show Elias that

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this meant something more than simply tying the rope tightly around his chest. But Elias had faith in my father. He took it all in but owned up that he had no head for book work, had gone through life in a one-style sort of way, like a horse, and would stand little chance of making his own labour less by means of the new system.

'Once a horse, always a horse,' said Elias forlornly, and he said it so often, my father, the most bruised and aimed-at stableman of his age and weight, stood clear, as if expecting Elias to fall in with the other ponies and throw a hoof at him.

'When I'm on that rope, Eli, pulling,' said Elias, 'I find it difficult enough breathing in the ordinary way without trying anything different.'

'You'll get into it, Elias. Patience and practice!'

'All right then. But don't say anything about this to Windsor or he'll stop us breathing altogether. When he's in the bucket he likes a steady hand on the rope. And he doesn't think so much of you as it is.'

'Windsor's a savage. He'll die toiling.'

It was when they were hauling Windsor up that morning that my father made his first experiment. We watched him closely. His eyes were closed. He scarcely seemed to be breathing at all and he wore around his lips a soft but masterful smile which he was copying from the man, a dark, wise-looking voter, whose photograph had appeared in the front of the book on breathing. The grasp of his hand on the rope was light and it seemed to pass through his fingers smoothly and without effort. At first we thought my father had got on the right track and the system was working. Then we heard a terrible gasping from Elias. His face was purple with overstrain and he was almost collapsing under the burden of pulling the whole load himself. When Windsor was safely delivered and out of earshot my father bent over the collapsed Elias. 'It works, Elias. It's a marvel, boy. Your mind seems to settle down into quiet sleep and you seem strong as a lion though you don't seem to be making any effort. And look at you. You stick to the old ways. You stick to muscle and brute strength. And look at you. You

can hardly talk. You're a greater wreck than my friend Waldo who is also wedded to ancient ways. Now when Windsor goes back again, you try my way. Just control your breathing and put your mind on something that makes your mind feel good, anything but the rope.'

Windsor re-entered the bucket. He smiled, a brief, rare smile, at Waldo who was staring at him with eyes that were full of the most startling interest and pity. To Waldo, who had heard my father's words to the helpless and enchanted Elias, Windsor was now little more than a fly winging directly to its doom in the dark web of my father's dreams. As soon as Windsor's head sank out of sight, my father turned to Elias and said, 'Now, Elias. The breath. Hold it, boy.' Elias did that. He did it deliberately. His glottis jerked up like an arm, as if his breath were a fleeing dog that had to be caught before it could be held.

'Watch them now,' said Waldo tensely. A pattern of agony began to pull at the browskin of Elias. His mind was obviously seeking that something that would make it feel good and in all the gutted wilderness within his skull there was nothing that did not shrink away from his questing thought, weeping its still tininess midway between great good, great evil. Then his face began to change colour and he pointed at his mouth to tell us that he no longer seemed able to breathe at all. He looked terrified. He started to writhe and let go the rope. My father was taken by surprise. He himself, as senior breather and mentor in the team, had been leaving it all to Elias. He was jerked forward at tremendous speed by the descending mass of Windsor who was now hurtling out of control through the last few feet that separated him from the bottom of the shaft. The bottom was soft mud. It did no harm if you fell clear of the bucket. My father had some of the skin knocked off his chin when it smacked with shocking squareness against the crossbar of the hauling gear and Windsor, on reascending swore himself hoarse. Beyond that, no harm was done.

That afternoon, Windsor, in general discussion with Naboth, insisted that the one place where my father could not put the whole enterprise in danger was at the very bottom of the shaft,

doing some digging. My father protested that this was foolishly wasting a high talent, now that he was well 'on his way to becoming a specialist on the rope. He hinted that if Windsor would stop being a clod and feel an urge to experiment they would soon see perfected a method of human haulage which would give Naboth's winding gear, now no more nor less than an organized pain in the bowels to all concerned, the force and efficiency of the steam-driven units that lined the bed of the valley. Windsor, in no mood for dickering, stood over my father, snarled and said he would have none of this. And into the bucket my father had to go. As he cocked his leg to enter he wore a look which from one side recalled Columbus and from the other an old, worn gnome who knows that he is definitely on his way to his last frolic. Even as he descended, he kept on orating until the mumble of his voice vanished into the thick sucking clay of the walls.

We gathered around the top of the hole to see how he was getting along. We had been invited to do this by Naboth who was wanting to know why it was that after so many minutes no bucketful of earth had yet been sent aloft by my father and Windsor had shouted down to him to know what in hell's name he thought he was supposed to be doing down there. We peered down. After we had got him sorted out from the clay we could see him clearly enough. He was sitting at the side of the excavation, doing nothing but looking petrified and staring up, apparently at the sky.

'He's gone jingles,' said Windsor, putting his hand to his temple and beginning to wind, to leave us in no doubt as to where he thought my father had gone.

'He's frightened,' said Waldo, 'Eli has funny nerves.'

'Good God,' said Elias. 'Is that what it is? Look at his eyes. They are filling the hole. He must be holding his breath again. Tell him to breathe, Waldo. He looks horrible.'

Then my father started to shout. He shouted with a piercing suddenness that sent Elias bounding back from the shaft like a ball. 'It's coming in,' roared my father. 'Waldo! Elias! It's coming in. Get me up! I'm trapped! Get me up!'

They told him to get into the bucket. He fell silent instantly and hopped in. They hauled him to the surface. He spent the rest of his day explaining what had happened. As soon as he got down there, he had looked up. And what did he see? Nothing. He said it again. Nothing. We looked as if we did not believe him. Not a damned thing, he repeated. Blank. Nothing. The sides of the hole had seemed to slope inward until they met and he thought he was trapped and shortly to be entombed and choked, the sides crumbling in upon him, with Windsor, still vindictive, shovelling a bit of extra stuff down from above to make sure. There was a name for the panic he had felt, he said. He had seen it in a book which had described this thing driving people mad by the thousand. But no book could really tell you what a hell of a feeling it was. It was written on his heart and unless we wanted to wriggle down his throat and have a look there the horror of it would have to remain unread. 'This is another worry I've got to face,' he said, after he had rested a while. 'Now I know I'm not to be trusted in any hole where I'm supposed to be able to see the opening and can't.' He grew bitter about this. 'Afraid. We're all afraid of something always. Life is black and lousy with fear. Night is only the stuff that rises from all the fear we sweat out of us through the day. It shouldn't be. I'm going back down there. I've been afraid of too many things. Bailiffs, bosses, dreams, neighbours, now holes. But I'll conquer this fear if it's the last thing I do.'

'It will be,' said Waldo, sombrely.

The next day Naboth decided to give my father one last try. He prepared to descend. Naboth, Elias and Windsor manned the rope. Before entering the bucket my father rested his arm on the cross-bar of the winding gear. Windsor began to mutter. My father put on that soft but masterful smile again that he had picked up from the dark-faced breath-controller in the book, as if to say to Windsor, victim of toil, knew not what he did. He told us that he could not let this moment pass without a few words of explanation from himself. He then gave us a long survey of fear through the ages and the manner in which it had nibbled upon the fibre of the poorer voters like a rat upon

cheese. He described himself as a bit of cheese so nibbled he would have to bribe the average rat with a bonús if he wanted to shed a few more crumbs. He told us of the deadly effects fear had had upon the lives of his listeners, blaming upon it such diverse complaints as Waldo's hernia, Naboth's baldness, and Elias' wife. They all became very interested and by grunts, shrugs and nods agreed that this fear was a lowering thing to be having about the place, a thing ripe to be shown the culvert. It was clear that my father was treating himself to a course of intense auto-propaganda to get his courage to the peak and when he arrived at the passage where he passed his own fears under review and he marked himself down as being descended from a long line of shudders, his self-pity welled up to a rising rhythm. It welled up so far he failed to see that Naboth, Elias and Windsor, thinking that this address would see them safe for at least another fifteen minutes, had dropped the rope and were following his argument with a dour mournfulness, as if it were a hearse. My father, thinking to make his exit dramatically, with the spotlight of his audience's sympathy still upon him, stepped quickly into the bucket and hurtled to the bottom at about a hundred miles an hour.

Windsor clambered down the rope after him. We all manned the rope to bring him, with my father on his shoulder, to the surface. My father had fallen nimbly and after a minute's hard slapping by Windsor, he opened his eyes. Naboth, who was a first-aid man said there was nothing broken and went pulling at my father's every limb as if he were disappointed about this and wanted to put it right. But nothing, not even Naboth trying to get everything out of the socket, could persuade my father to rise. He had had the wits scared out of him.

'I'm finished,' he kept saying. 'My doom was coal. But there's nowhere I'd have wanted it to happen better than here on my native hills.' We could see him sucking the pleasure from those words.

Then we called Dan and on to Dan's barrow we loaded him. We wheeled him home, watching the look of total, stricken

bemusement on his face. Waldo explained to Dan how my father had taken up with the breathing caper.

'He learned it from an Indian in a book.'

'Old fakir!' bawled Dan as we came into the main street. 'Old fakir, one and four a sack. Cheap, cheap, buy now, buy now!'

My father waved the barrow to a halt. He stared piteously at Dan, got out and walked, offended to the very root of his strange, wondering self.

Crowning Glory

P. H. NEWBY

'WILL you sell it?' said the barber and Nora looked at his reflection in the mirror.

Her hair was the colour of harvest. His scissors had ceased clicking and he was gently lifting the fine strands with the tips of his fingers.

'The loveliest hair I've ever seen,' he said. 'I'd rather as not you'd gone to someone else to cut your plaits off. It's destruction. There's something wanton in it. It's like cutting down a great tree. You're sure now you'll not change your mind? It's still not too late.'

'I'm too big for plaits,' she said.

'Too big? You're still a child. A woman's chief glory, it's her hair, you know. The village won't be the same without *yours* to look at.'

'I'm fifteen. Besides, I get headaches. The doctor said they'd best come off.'

The barber bulked up the mass of hair for the pleasure of seeing it catch and hold the sunlight. 'And will you sell it after all?' he said. 'I'd give you a couple of pounds. No, I mean it.'

There's a market for hair like this. Though I'd rather set it up in a show-case for the pleasure of looking at it.'

But no, Nora said, her mother had told her to be sure and bring her plaits home with her. Her plaits? That had been the first shock. For some time, ever since her mother had decided that plaits were old-fashioned and persuaded the doctor to back up her point of view, Nora had been looking forward to having them cut off. But then, she had imagined that the process would be simpler. A quick snip! snip! of the barber's scissors (they had no ladies' hairdresser in the village) and the plaits, she had thought, would be put into her hand, complete and entire. But things had not worked out like that.

The barber placed a table at her right hand. On top of the table he placed a newspaper. Then he started to undo the plaits and drape the hair over her shoulders, talking with so much gentleness and so encouragingly that Nora knew he realized he was doing the unexpected. Only her mother had previously touched her hair in this way and for a moment Nora could almost persuade herself that the barber was indeed her mother until he did something so surprising, so much out of her mother's routine, that she lifted her eyes to the mirror. The barber was lifting and sifting her tresses, then snipping them off with the points of a large pair of scissors. And she had cried out before she remembered that it was for this that she had come. The barber paused in some concern.

'Hurt you?'

She shook her head, he smiled into the mirror, returned to his work and snipped off another tress. As he cut off the lengths of hair so he laid them side by side on top of the table. They lay like newly-reaped wheat, longer than his arm and stirring in the light breeze that was everywhere in the small bright shop that morning.

Nora could see the top of the table in the mirror. And whereas she had not, up to the time she had come into the shop, thought of the loss of her plaits with very much feeling either for or against, she now felt her skin itching with an emotion that was stronger than dismay but only part of the way along the track

to horror. Her hair which, once severed from her head should have been dead, was still alive. The breeze played over it, the ends quivered and turned up, there was motion along the entire length of the tresses. She would have been reluctant to touch them yet she stared at the little load the table was carrying, stared until she wanted to cry.

'There, it's all over, my lass,' said the barber in a burst of cheerfulness. 'Now if you'll just hang on a minute I'll get this little lot fixed up so you can take it home.'

But Nora did not wait. She could not. She felt upset, but it was due to something more than a realization of her loss or the thought that she had taken a step outside the magic circle of childhood. As soon as the scissors had finished their work and the barber began bundling up the hair for her to take home she was afraid. She wanted to run away and hide herself.

Without saying a word to the barber she stepped out into the village street and ran up the cobbled hill towards home. She had made her escape while the barber's back had been turned, but now that he had noticed her absence and was standing on the step of his shop to shout after her she felt hunted. Passers-by on the other side of the street called across to her; but for Nora the barber's shout was a shout of derision and all the other voices were cries of scorn.

Then she saw her father. Abruptly she slowed to a walk. Standing on the doorstep of his baker's shop in his white shirt, his white apron that reached down to the toes of his flour-encrusted boots and on his head a high white hat, he was as tall and firm as a tower.

What would he say? Seeing him standing there in that frozen, aloof and almost splendid dignity Nora found new causes for alarm. Her mother and she had not consulted father about the plaits because—well, because it was the kind of thing it was hard to imagine father getting interested in. His daughter's hair? A small and personal matter that needed the kind of intimate talk he never held. He spoke at you directly and powerfully from a distance of six feet, the backside of a horse or the width of a trough in between. But Nora felt that she could not be sure about

her father. All her apprehension—that apprehension that had been born the moment she had looked at her severed tresses—all her fear of scorn, her sense of nakedness, were gathered up in the larger fear of what her father would say.

He looked at her and beckoned. She crossed the street and stood in front of him, looked up at the large blond moustache that was a colder, paler tone of the colour of her own hair, and listened. He was scolding her for running. ‘Running about the place like a March hare,’ he said, and the words floated out to the faces of the whitewashed cottages opposite. He was not even looking at her.

‘Yes, Daddie,’ she said and entered the house through the yard where the bread was cooling and crackling in the racks. It had proved no relief that her father had not scolded her about her hair. It was, on the contrary, a wholly unexpected grief that he had not even noticed that she was no longer wearing her plaits.

‘My, how smart you look!’ Her mother was gay and bustling. ‘Quite the young lady, eh? Well, I must say I’m glad it’s all over and done with. What I say is this: long ‘air is all very well for them as ‘as the time to attend to it. Otherwise it’s a dirt trap. And we’re busy people. No, my girl, you’ve done a sensible thing.’

Nora did not like to take all the responsibility for the decision. Her mother had done all the urging. ‘I feel awful,’ she said. ‘Sort of naked.’

Her mother said: ‘Now I’m not going to have any nonsense like that.’ She was bustling about with steaming saucepans and plates and colanders of vegetables. ‘I believe in being in the swim. Whatever else people say about me they can’t say I’m not in the fashion. I believe in it. It’s up to me, I say to myself. And I’ll see that my daughter does the same. Who wears plaits these days? Ask me that! Go on, ask me that and see what I say! No, my lass, Nora Godwin’s going to be the smartest girl in the village or I’ll know the reason why.’

And she meant it, every word of it. She was a plump and still pretty woman with dark eyes that were in surprising contrast to

her hair which, although it had once been the same colour as her daughter's, had now lost its warmth and animation and was clustered in small artificial curls all round her head. She had a fondness for strong, simple colours, she wore cherry-coloured ear-rings and a necklace of green shells.

'Of course,' she went on, waggling a cigarette between her lips, 'we won't be satisfied with just that.' She was twisting the ends of Nora's hair between her fingers. 'I think—just as a beginning, mind you—we'll get these ends permed up. Got to experiment. See how the hair takes to it.' She stood so close that the smoke from her cigarette made Nora's eyes water. 'By the way, what have you done with the plaits?'

Before Nora could answer the barber's daughter appeared at the window holding what were obviously the plaits wrapped up in newspaper.

'Dad says you forgot this,' said the little girl with great solemnity, and Nora's mother gave her a cake for her trouble.

The package lay on the table. At one end it was torn and some strands of hair escaped. As the woman plucked at the paper there was a rattle of trays and pans from the bakehouse; the second batch of bread was being drawn. The steamy sweetness of bread hot from the oven was wafted down the stone passage.

'What can we do with it? What's it good for?' said the woman in mock despair. There was, of course, no question of what was to be done with the hair. Nora knew that her mother had insisted on her bringing the plaits home from the barber's because the intention was to preserve them. They were going to be put away in a drawer with mothballs.

'Let's put it in the fire,' said Nora looking at her dead hair. The barber had worked it up into one short, fat plait that seemed to weigh very heavily on the crumpled newspaper. Yes, that was it! The plaits must be destroyed. Or if her mother could not be persuaded to do this then Nora did not want to know what her mother proposed doing with her hair, she wanted to forget that it was in the house, did not want to hear it mentioned again.

But this was absurd, and her mother said so with an affectionate laugh. 'You wicked girl!' She wrapped the hair up once

more. 'I'll make two neat plaits out of this and then you'll see how nice it is.'

'The barber said he'd give me two pounds for it. I want to sell it. It's no good.'

Her mother gave her a kiss and said something very flattering and delightful. 'I wouldn't sell it, my dear, for all the money in the world.'

From her mother, then, Nora could expect no understanding. But the girl wanted more than understanding. She wanted recognition of the importance of the change she was going through, she wanted presents, she wanted to wake up early in the morning to find the bed heavy with exciting brown parcels, she wanted the gaiety of a party; at the very least she wanted a kiss. But nobody would give her a kiss, certainly not the person from whom she most wanted love, her father. At meal-times especially she was tempted to call across to him: 'I say, what d'you think of the new way I've done my hair? I've lost my plaits, you know.' It should have been so simple. But although the words were frequently trembling on her lips she could never quite bring herself to pronounce them. Her father would be absorbed in his newspaper, he would be in a hurry to get out on the round, he would be talking of bills. It would have been pleasanter, of course, for him to notice the change for himself. But as time went by it was obvious that he would never notice the loss of her plaits and someone, it could not be herself, would have to tell him. Her mother, then? No, she did not want her mother to tell father, not at this stage. She was angry with her mother for not, by some hint, by some suggestion, having drawn her father's attention to the fact that the girl was now a woman.

Nora felt forsaken. She knew that the great occasion was being missed and her feelings were so intense that she made an effort to escape from them. Happiness, she felt, did not depend on either her father or her mother; it depended on herself. She was calling herself to some act of celebration, her own, personal celebration of her young womanhood. When, therefore, a gipsy woman looked in through the kitchen window the following

Saturday morning and gave them an offer for the hair Nora felt that the dark Romany face (all they could see of the woman) was the creation of her own imagination.

It was the time that her mother had chosen to rearrange the hair. The task was much more difficult than either of them had anticipated. It was easy enough to unravel the slack plait that the barber had so rapidly made, but her idea of dividing the hair into two great tresses and so recreating the two plaits as Nora had worn them proved to be work for an expert. Even though they made one end of the tress firm under the weight of a flat-iron the plaiting was repeatedly coming to pieces under their fingers. If it was going to be anything of a job at all they would have to take the yard-long hairs one by one and knot them together at the ends. They stood back and looked at the hair. The window was open, the sunlight poured through, and the tresses ran like a river in the brightness.

At this point the Romany head appeared. The woman had come so silently and spoke with such little warning that they were both startled.

'How did you get in here?' Nora's mother demanded. The double gates that led into the yard were propped open—in a few minutes the baker would be starting out on his round—so the answer was obvious. 'No, nothing to-day, thank you,' Nora heard her mother saying. She had been startled and was getting her own back. She would not normally have spoken in this way. Dark Romany eyes looked out of a face that was wrinkled like a walnut. The gipsy woman smiled and Nora smiled. Then the dark eyes went down to the golden hair that was spread on the table.

'That's my hair,' said Nora brightly. She was surprised at herself. 'I've just had it all cut off.' The gipsy woman had, she felt, come in answer to her own dark summons. From this impressive face, if from anyone, Nora would learn the answer to a question she could not even frame. How can I be happy? No, that was not it. She waited for the gipsy to speak, quite confident of the answer and suddenly gay. The sun left the gipsy woman's face in a kind of obscurity but she seemed to carry the

light of the morning like a javelin upon her shoulder. She leaned forward—she must have been standing on tiptoe—and gazed at the hair.

'Nora!' said her mother in indignation, disturbed by her boldness. The morning paper was lying on the chair where her husband had left it after breakfast. She picked it up, opened it and spread it over the flow of hair feeling that, as she could not immediately force the gipsy woman away, the hair had to be protected from her eyes.

The Romany eyes followed every movement of her fingers. They stared at the newspaper.

'If it should cross your mind to sell the hair,' she said in a steady pure English, 'how much would you think of asking?' The gipsy was no longer a saleswoman of whatever she had brought in her basket. She was a purchaser. Her question was addressed to Nora.

'We're not going to sell. Will you please go away?' Nora's mother was hostile.

The gipsy woman hesitated. She showed a pair of fine white teeth. 'You think I'd sell it again and make a profit? No, my love, not with hair like that.' She stretched out a hand towards the table, but Nora's mother bundled the hair up under the newspaper and moved it away out of her reach. 'If I bought this hair I should keep it. It's beautiful hair.'

'How much would you give?' said Nora.

Her mother, scandalized, turned on her. 'Go to your room at once, Nora, you wicked girl. And as for you—if you're not off the premises within two seconds I'll call my man—'

'It's not *your* hair,' said Nora to her mother. 'It's mine. I'll do with it what I want.'

Her mother drew in her breath sharply.

The gipsy woman was talking. 'You can't keep it in the house anyway, my love. Dead hair under the roof will destroy you all. Your luck is in it, what d'you say? If it's not to me then it'll be to another. But you can't hold it any longer than you hold your breath.'

Nora's mother went to fetch her husband. When she returned

the gipsy had gone and Nora was spreading the hair out over the table just as it had been before the arrival of the gipsy.

'What's going on?' said her father brusquely. He was carrying a large basket containing bread, for he had been caught loading up the van before going out on delivery. 'What's this you were telling me?' he said to his wife, wrinkling up his face as though he had already forgotten what she had, in great excitement and indignation, been telling him. 'A gipsy woman?' And he looked slowly round the room as though expecting her to be there. By now, of course, the gipsy woman was well away down the lane.

Not seeing the golden flood of hair on the table the baker set his basket squarely on top of it and called for a cup of tea before he went out.

After he had gone Nora thought of the bad luck her hair was going to bring.

Because father was still out delivering bread at five o'clock Nora and her mother had their tea without him. They ate in a silence broken only by the cries of children at play under the lime trees on the other side of the garden wall. The woman set down her teacup on the table, sat looking at her daughter for a moment and then left the room. Nora heard her walking along the passage overhead and knew that she was going to her bedroom. When she returned she had two one-pound notes in her hand. She gave them to Nora.

'There you are, my girl. I don't want you to get upset by any old gipsy's tales. They ought to be run in for telling such wicked lies. It's all nonsense. Hair in the house never brought nobody any bad luck. But I know what young girls think about gipsies and I'll not have it playing on your imagination. There! I sold your hair and there's the two pound and that's an end of the matter.'

'Who did you sell it to?' said Nora.

The woman coloured. Her eyes sparkled. 'What's that you say? Well, who'd you think I'd sell it to? The barber, of course. It's out of the house, you understand, it's not under this roof.'

She began clattering the crockery on to a tray. 'Anybody would think you didn't believe me.'

There was silence.

'Answer me,' her mother insisted. 'D'you think I'm telling a lie?'

'What'll I do with the money?' If it had not been for the money it would never have occurred to Nora to doubt her mother. But she had never been given so much money all at once before and it made her suspicious. 'I don't take any notice of what gipsies say.'

'D'you think I'm telling you a lie?' her mother shouted.

Nora was startled. Until her mother lost her temper Nora had not doubted her. But now she was quite sure that, for some unknown reason, her mother was lying and the hair was hidden somewhere about the house. 'I don't want the money,' she said and tried to hand the notes back. Her mother would not take them. They were in the middle of their quarrel when father walked in from the yard. By now Nora was on the point of tears.

Father stood in the doorway holding an empty basket.

Out on the round he frequently picked up a warm good humour that would sometimes last all through the evening. This happened to be just such a time and his eyes were alive. Nora felt that, when he looked at her, he was really seeing her. 'What are you two 'arpies shrieking at?' he said with a note in his voice that might almost have been teasing.

'It's my hair.' Nora turned sulky. 'It's been cut off.'

'What!' Her father set his basket on the ground, took a couple of steps across the kitchen, bent down and seized her by the shoulders. 'What's that you say?' His voice was pitched high with outrage. 'What the 'ell——' His hand clutched at the nape of her neck, he picked her up in his arms and held her. 'When was this done?' he demanded of his wife. She was alarmed by the tone of hostility.

'The doctor said long hair was giving her headaches. You know very well when it was done. You've got eyes in your head, haven't you?'

'You'd got no damn' call to do anything of the sort.' He was

more upset than angry and Nora, still held tightly in his arms, thrilled to the first strong emotion to come anywhere near expressing the loss of her plaits. His anger called up another anger of her own and the impulse that she had, a moment before, to kiss her father, was suddenly transformed into spite.

'Mummy told me a fib.'

'Don't you talk like that to your Ma, you little spitfire.' Father joggled her in his arms.

'She told me she'd sold my plaits and got two pounds for them. She didn't, she didn't, she told a fib.' She found that she was still holding the pound notes in her hand and she threw them on to the floor.

'Here, here, here!' Father was forgetting his own anger in an attempt to console her. 'If they're gone they're gone and we can't have 'em back again. Stop it, d'you hear me!' He gave her leg a slap.

But Nora was not to be so easily shaken out of her fit.

'I don't want them in the house; I don't want to hear of them; I don't want to see them; you can burn them if you like. I don't care.'

Her father set her on her feet with a jolt.

'What've you done with the plaits? Go and get 'em.' In a moment Nora was calm. 'I'll soon put a stop to all this bloody nonsense,' she heard her father saying, and she was stilled by a calm rejoicing that he once more was now the master. His royal temper flared over the room.

When her mother returned with the package of hair he took it in his hands and showed it to his daughter. 'You see what I've got here? You see what I've got in me 'ands?'

Nora nodded. She was both frightened and proud of her father.

'Now stay 'ere, both of you,' he said and, taking the package with him left the room. They could hear his boots gritting away down the passage, heard him fling open the door of the bake-house—and after that Nora had to follow him in her imagination. She saw him go over to the firehole and knock the steel door open with the handle of a palette knife. At this time of the day

the fire would have burned low, but even so there would be a channel of red coals thrust right to the very back of the oven. And when her father tossed the package on to the coals, for a moment nothing happened. It lay there on the fiery floor as tight as a bun. Then unseen hands appeared to be opening it, folding back the double thickness of paper until the polished tresses themselves lay quietly under the blue incandescence. The newspaper pouted up in vigorous flame and the hair, each strand vibrant with desperate life, began to move. It was indestructible. The fire did not come to it for it was, suddenly, the fire itself, a fine net of gold spun into a heap, flaring from within. And then it had gone.

Nora felt triumphant. She went upstairs, entered her room and flung herself on her bed. An act worthy of her new dignity had been carried out; she felt free and happy.

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A couple of months later her mother was turning out some drawers when she found the hair, still wrapped in newspaper, thrust under some of her husband's underclothes where he must have pushed it. Like her daughter the woman had assumed that the hair had been destroyed. The sight of it moved her in a way that was quite unexpected. The hair had been hidden away like her husband's love and tenderness. If, almost by accident, she could come across the one was it not reasonable to think that she could come across the other also?

She took the package over to the window and unwrapped it in the sun. The hair sprang up like warmth and joy released and she could not keep back a cry of pleasure at the sight of it. And as she took pleasure in the sight of the hair so she took pleasure in the thought of her daughter. She watched her graceful walk, her womanly poise, her growing self-confidence.

It was as though she, the mother, was standing where the road forked. She was not hesitating which of the roads to follow—she really wished to remain where she was—but the compulsion to continue was strong enough to split her sympathies into two. Under this continual twin recession of her nature she could

hardly draw a breath, could not have blown a petal from her lips. She was, at one and the same time, the mother who was no longer young and youth itself, walking from room to room, going up the street and down the street, with smuts of red upon her lips and the short hair curling above her neck.

She thought it strange that it should have been her husband who had shown her that the plaits had gone for ever.

The End of the Hunt

SHEA MURPHY

WE moved through dusky streets with the soft rain on our faces. Three of us. The I.R.A. We carried the bomb in a suitcase, a crude-made bomb. We would rather have been carrying rifles like the men of 1916, but we carried a bomb in a suitcase. The soft rain swirled around us, the wet night swung around us, we were men that walked in darkness and in darkness to one another. For each man was a stranger, in his raincoat he was a stranger, in his soft hat pressed above him, in his right hand in his pocket, each man was cold, remote, without kindness. I did not know them at all with the dark night pressing around them: I did not know myself: I was a mystery to myself. We walked in a terrible darkness, dark eyes, dark faces: we were ready to kill in the darkness, to shoot at the police, for each man held a trigger and saw death in the darkness.

The night was a hundred streets and the windows a thousand faces. We saw things in the windows, the staring eyes and faces, we thought that they had seen us, but somehow they were our own eyes and faces staring through glass at us.

We walked along saying nothing, because nothing was to be said between us. We knew what we had to do and to do that

thing we had come out. We had come from the homes and the firesides to plant a bomb in the darkness.

We hurried on more quickly, the rain beating down behind us. There was nobody upon the roads: it was one o'clock in the morning: we moved past an old church corner: we were nearing the countryside. We planted the bomb in a meadow at the foot of an electric pylon. Then we ran back into the city, the great dark arms of the city and the roar and the flash went up behind us.

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I could think. I had broken the law of England. I could hear it on the wireless: I could read it in the papers. The police were out: they were after the I.R.A.: they were after me and my two comrades. But they could not possibly know us.

Think to myself I could by the kitchen fireside with the melodeon on my knee. I could think in the soft touch of the music, I could sing a little to myself in the dreamy Irish airs. Perhaps I had done that for the music, planted that bomb for the music, the music was filled with tears and the sadness of all my countrymen.

My mother would look at me, my sisters would look at me. They had heard the news on the wireless; and they knew my mind and myself. But they did not know one thing. I had never told them that. I had never told them about the I.R.A. But they looked at me in the kitchen.

By and by I went out. I could not be with my mother: she was growing old, and I was her only son. I would break if I stayed in the kitchen. I would break my heart in the kitchen if I looked long at my mother. I went out into the street.

The people were looking at me. They seemed to know about me and what I had done that morning in the meadow and the rain. I went out of the street quickly. I felt a fear upon me which was blacker than any fear. I had a secret in me, and the police were after that secret.

The police? I had never been in trouble with the police once in my life, not once. The only policeman I had ever spoken to was one who carried me to an ambulance when I had broken my

leg in a school-boy accident. I liked that policeman. But these others, these others I saw for the first time—I was not quite sure of them.

They appeared to be everywhere along the streets, black policemen looking at me. They seemed to be about to stop me and I drew back. My gun was in the dump along with the other guns, but I doubt if I would have drawn it upon them. At night I would not be afraid in another district against the policemen, but here in my own district I felt fear. I was afraid of what the English people might do to my home and mother. I was afraid of mobs springing up, tearing down the house, frightening my sisters, killing my mother. . . . I was afraid of things which came to me for the first time.

I walked through the policemen making my face calm. They could not know anything. The I.R.A. was a secret organization. Every man held the secret.

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When the family had gone to bed that night I sat down to read a book. I sat in the room because it was near the street, and I wanted to hear the feet upon the street. I had a fear on me since I had planted the bomb, and if anyone came to the house I wanted to be the first to meet them. So I sat reading in the room waiting for the feet of people who might have discovered me. By and by they came. I heard them in the distance in a solid, regular thud. They were marching up the street and seemed to swell into a roar. They were like the feet of men pushing into one another. They were eager.

They stopped at the door. I thought somehow it was a dream and that the feet would go on. But they remained and a loud knock came at the door.

I went out of the room in a daze and down the passage. I wanted to get to the door before they knocked again and woke up my mother and sisters. I threw open the door. The detectives were outside and one of them held a search-warrant.

They came with me back into the room and he read out the warrant to me. But the rest of the detectives were raiding the

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house whilst he was speaking. They found nothing. My mother and sisters were crying in the bedrooms.

They had searched me. They told me I was an I.R.A. man; they told me the names of others; they told me I was a tool of big men over in Ireland, a good boy, but a tool, that they knew everything about the I.R.A., and that I might as well open up to them. But I said nothing. I was thinking of the family upstairs and the home that the police had ransacked. I could see my melodeon torn open and thrown upon the floor, I could see my history books lying across the fender and my sisters' letters opened and strewn about. The room was a rackety wreck: the secrets of the room were looted. They left me. They said they would get me if I tried any more I.R.A. tricks, and went out into the night. Yet they had not questioned me about the bomb and I thought then that they knew very little.

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Then came a time they would whisper in the street, 'Here he comes,' and I would come into the street. Home from my work I would come with the detectives trailing me. The people would stand in the doorways, the English and Irish people, and some of them would smile with doubt. I would hear them talking.

'Ah, he wouldn't plant them bombs. Look, he's only a boy.'

'But I don't know about that. Them lads that got twenty years the other day were only boys too.'

'Ah, shut up!' would come an English voice. 'They are only making one mistake. They should be blowing up the big bugs and leave the telephone boxes alone.'

So I would hear them talking, and once before I could put my foot in the door an old woman from down the street grabbed me by the arm. I stepped back, thinking she was going to swear at me because she had a name for being an Orangewoman and hating the Catholics. But she was crying.

'Lord love you, son,' she said, sobbing, 'but keep yourself out of prison. They had my Bill in once for being drunk and wild, and they nearly killed our Bill.' Then she gave me a pat

on the arm and ran away. I looked down the street. The detectives were on the corner.

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I would go among the homes still and sit in the corner with the repaired melodeon. But there was a change. The people had changed. They were afraid when I was in the house, afraid of the police outside. But they would never tell me to go. But I would go. With a queer feeling in my chest I would go. I would be hurt some way by the people and I stopped going around to them. I would go down to the Irish dances and find most of them there the same. They were afraid of the I.R.A. and the plain-clothes men behind them. They condemned the bombing as foolish and mad the men who did it. I would enter a dance-hall in a silence and whispers would run around the room. Some of the people would leave, and those that remained behind would be restless and strangely nervous. You would find strange streaks in people. You would find people here and there whom you never thought would sympathize giving you little warnings and wishes of encouragement; you would find people who were sympathetic before the bombing turning their backs on you. You would find some of the Englishmen at work the most surprising. They would help you, warn you, hide stuff for you, and damn you for a fool with their mouths. They did it because they were your friends and not for any other reason. They would joke about the bombing, the English, but the Irish would say nothing: they were careful of the police, had memories of the police in the days when I was a boy.

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Still you would find the people. You would be out late one night and you would be tired. You would have had a patient job to shake off the detectives, and then to plant your bomb beneath an old bridge over the canal. You would run, run, run in the flare-up of your bomb and come to a stranger part of Liverpool. It was too late and dangerous to go home: where can I go to-night, and lay myself till morning? You would

remember then you knew people in this district, Irish they might be or English, and because you were tired and hungry and had nowhere to lie, you would go to them. You would creep down the pitch-black streets looking for names and numbers and you would suddenly see a door you thought you had seen before. You would recognize the house; you had danced in there in the kitchen and, maybe, played your melodeon in the corner by the fire. You would knock gently and softly and wait. You would hear feet upstairs, see a light, you would wait. You would look over your shoulder down the street: it would be dark and cold, and you fancied you saw detectives. But there would be no one there.

The door would open slowly. There would be a light coming out. It would be a woman or man with children holding to them. You would look at them. You would look and you could say nothing. They would look back at you strangely and suddenly they would rush out quickly for you, they would gather you fondly to them and drag you into the hall. They would take you into the kitchen and blow up the kitchen fire and lay out food before you. They would not look at you and you would think of them they did not want you. You would rise to go, but they would hold you down and speak to you and make a bed up for you. You could lie down there until morning and go from there to your work. It was the way of the people and those who did not want you never gave you away.

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But we were growing useless; the Liverpool men were useless; the police knew every one of us; they knew our tricks and ways. We became dangerous to all about us. The raids came in our footsteps; we could do nothing, nothing; the police knew everything. They captured all our dumps; they sentenced men amongst us; they were building evidence up to catch the luckier ones. Our thirty-five men shrank down until only a few were left. And these few went over to Ireland to be replaced by others who were coming over from Ireland. There were I.R.A. men passing one another over the sea, coming and going in the dark-

ness to death or the prison cell. I went with the few from Liverpool leaving my people behind.

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We were locked in the night and the mountains; the cradle of night and the mountains: we were up and over the Irish city: ten men with a Lewis gun. The Lewis gun was heavy: it joggled on the front man's shoulders and we saw it swaying heavily. Up grassy slopes we went and slid down slippery hollows, the man in front was sweating and groaning with every step. But it was not the man we followed; it was the Lewis gun above him, for the Lewis gun was ours in trust for the organization. We had been out all day with the Lewis gun in the mountains. We had fired it at rocks and boulders. We had held it inside our arms and moved with fire on the mountains. And now it was covered and going home on our shoulders. But we were late out that night and the mountain dark had caught us. We were lost in the crawling hills, ten men with a Lewis gun.

One of the men was from Liverpool. He walked behind me in silence and I peeped back at his face. His face was young and dark with a curly head above it; he shivered in the night: it was colder than the Liverpool docks.

I threw my face to the mountains and throbbed with the pant of the wind. There seemed to be life in the mountains, some great heart-beat up there. I thought that God was there: for God He seemed in the mountains and we seemed to go to God.

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We struck the house in the hollow beneath the thundering breeze and looked in the shadows at it down a long avenue. We did not know the house. It was grey with round stone pillars and windows set like eyes each side of a gaping door. We marched up the sighing avenue with the trees bent over our heads and we heard the great wind thunder in the top boughs of the trees. We stood by the lonely house at the end of the avenue.

Not that we wished to stand there, not that we liked the

house: we felt like turning backward and looking for a road. Because it was the kind of a house which had a gloom about it.

We went up the old stone steps and hammered at the grey-white door. But we got no sound or answer. The house seemed an empty house. Then the Liverpool boy jumped up and we hoisted him into a window. He was the smallest among us and fitted in quite easily. He disappeared from us and we waited on the steps. He was a long time coming and the rain which had been threatening swept us in on the porch. But he came at last with his small, brave face and eyes and let us into the house. We went along a corridor.

There was nobody inside the house; nothing but empty rooms devoid of pictures or furniture. We went up into one of the bedrooms and placed the Lewis gun there. Then we sat around and smoked waiting for the rain to lighten.

‘Come out! come out, you bastards! come out!’ They were shouting all round the house; they were hammering and shaking the door; they were smashing the door and windows; they were shrieking along the corridor:

‘Come out! come out, come out!’

We heard a whine of cars, the smash of glass; we ran around the room; we were trapped at last, at last . . . there was no way out of it, we were running round in a trap, whatever way we looked we saw the bars of the trap; we charged into each room and fell back from the windows; we saw the faces there, the pale and relentless faces with guns held low beneath them; we ran out of the rooms and up and down the stairs, we looked up to the roof; we heard a Thompson gun . . .

The Thompson gun was spraying its death into each window, its quivering, lightning death above our crouching heads. The Lewis gun was useless against the hidden police. There were soldiers out there too in a ring around the house: we could see their buttons gleaming and the side tilt of their helmets.

'Come out, come out, come out!' with a loud death in their voices. But we fired back at their voices and scattered through the house.

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The roof was above our heads and in the roof a skylight. There were leaves pressing down on the skylight; there were trees overhanging the house. We gathered beneath the skylight with the roar of the guns around us and one man leapt for the skylight and crashed through to the roof. 'Up! up!' Others leapt for the skylight; some got through and hung on; others fell back in blood. The blood of our fingers dripped downward. It fell on the faces below, the piteous, pleading faces of men beyond reach of the skylight.

'Up! up!' They leapt and they clawed for the skylight and we that were up shrieked and yelled.

'Up! up!' But the police had crashed through the door. They were firing along the corridor, and running along as they fired. They swept with their lead down the corridor cutting the way to the skylight. They fell, the men that were hanging fell with their wild eyes of pain looking at us. We turned and plunged into the sweeping trees. We went down boughs to the earth; we were outside the ring of the police; we were creeping through the silent soldiers but they had no eyes like the police. They were holding their rifles and staring with goggling mouths at the house. We crawled through them, dark and quickly, eating the earth with our mouths. But the Liverpool boy lay dead for the I.R.A. in the mountains.

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That night we came to the city with blood on our hands and faces. We had lost the Lewis gun; we had lost several men and a boy. We could not face the people in the broad lights of the city. We scattered and went different ways.

The police were about the city. The soldiers were standing on corners. They were holding up cars and buses and looking

into each face. I slunk through the blackest alleyways with the cuts upon my face.

I was afraid of the people. The people I saw on corners, the people I saw in windows, the people I saw in the streets. I was afraid even of the children playing in the gutters. I shivered and hurried past them with the fear caught in my throat.

I was afraid of shadows, of policemen in the shadows, of soldiers in the shadows, of eyes that stared in the shadows, of hands that pointed at me . . .

Everyone was my enemy; everyone dreaded me. I had raised my gun to the police and fired at the government. Everyone seemed to know me; everyone seemed to hit me; I could feel the urge within them to tear this man to bits . . . But they were afraid to do so; afraid of the organization . . . I was a dog in the gutter; and I crawled like a dog in the gutter; they spat on me in the gutter but they ran away as they spat. I was the I.R.A.

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I would come up once a week for air, go for a walk beneath the stars, have a drink in a pub, go to a picture house in the suburbs, keep away from crowds and dance-halls, come back, go down underground again. I did this because I had seen my photograph and description in a police newspaper. Over the photograph it had 'tall youth, auburn hair, grey eyes, fresh complexion, English accent.' Then a history of myself opening in England and leading into Ireland. My name was there also.

Whilst living underground I worked for the organization. I was one of the staff of an underground newspaper and we published several thousand copies a week. The newspaper was distributed through underground channels and the penalty for distribution or possession was imprisonment. We had the press in the basement room of a suburban house and whilst the house was nominally a house of flats the I.R.A. were the only tenants.

We grew to look upon our job as any other job. We did it conscientiously, ten full hours a day and at night we were tired. The police faded from our minds and we became like ordinary hard-working citizens. Only when there was an unusual knock

at the door or we saw a man like a detective standing outside the house did we remember. We slipped back suddenly then into our true position. We remembered then that we were wanted men and that anybody who gave information on us could claim a reward. It was then we felt fear; not of the police, but of the informer. To dwell for a moment on the possibility of an informer brought some form of madness to us. We were helpless if we were getting informed upon. Everything we did was useless; everything we did was putting the rope around our necks. The informer was our most dreaded enemy. There was no qualm in our minds about the shooting of an informer, not the least doubt there about the rectitude of such an act. The informer had to die. Then there were the police touts. These touts were people—not of the organization—who carried little bits of information to the police. Sometimes they touted for pay, or for favouritism—sometimes for fear, but to us their motives did not matter—they carried it. We could seldom discover the police touts since they observed us from outside our ranks, but they were never as dangerous to us as the informer. The tout only saw our open movements, but the informer, he saw our secret movements. He was in our mind all the time and if we were not careful he became an obsession to us. It was wrong to contemplate too much on the possibility of an informer. It interfered with the work. . . .

There were men coming and going in the underground: there were whispers of Germans landing in Kerry: one report said they had been dropped by air in Tipperary: you would not know what to believe and got so that you believed nothing. . . . There were soldiers and auxiliary soldiers everywhere on the roads and on the mountains. There were police everywhere. We could not go out of the city without being stopped by them. We were only safe in the underground and even that safety was precarious. The fact was that the detectives of the Special Branch had been I.R.A. men once themselves and knew all the ropes and tricks. They were knocking us off one by one. It was a case

of waiting to be arrested or getting killed. I sometimes felt my hours of freedom or life were getting numbered and I could not shake this feeling off.

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We would pick up the papers each morning and read the corroboration of what we had heard the night before. So-and-so was arrested and charged with being the member of an illegal organization styling itself 'The Irish Republican Army.' We would laugh among ourselves and say: 'Well, poor so-and-so will have a good rest now.' We could never imagine ourselves being arrested. We had been out so long on the run that we didn't think it possible. Everyone else might be arrested but not us.

Still we were getting worn out some way. Sometimes I would feel tired and wonder what caused it. There was something inside of me shaking all the time and I couldn't stop it shaking. . . . And then I would long for a quiet cosy home and a woman's eyes over the table-cloth . . .

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It was good to get up from the underground once a week. I would shave myself, change my clothes and saunter out into the darkening evenings. I would have myself disguised simply. Just a bit of thick hair-oil on my hair to darken it, a dark suit and a white collar. I thought this sufficient since the police photograph depicted me in a loose rain-coat with a hat over one eye. I also changed my walk from a long, quick stride to a slow, short one.

I would walk in the soft evening along the banks of the canal. There would be a slow breeze pressing against my face and the skies would be drifting white and dusky blue. A scent of flowers and sweet grass would come to me and along my way children would be playing and young couples sitting on seats. I would saunter along smoking a cigarette occasionally nodding to elderly people who passed by on their way to church. They would remind me of my father and mother. Everything would

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be so peaceful: the sky, the water and the people: I would want to sit down on the grass and forget everything but these. . . .

But I would never sit down. There was a restlessness inside of me which kept me walking. I was afraid if I sat down on the grass for one minute and allowed my mind to grow fixed on the evening's beauty I would be caught. The unseen detectives might be watching me. . . .

Wary I would be of the beautiful evening but in the middle of my wariness I would be thinking of doing some sweet, wild thing and taking a girl out where detectives might not be watching me. . . .

But I had never had a girl: not once in all my life, although I had dreamed of girls upon my road and danced with them in the houses . . . yet never had one . . . I wondered what it was like to have a girl who would pray for me on the run and meet me in secret places, and in my wondering and dreaming I left the banks of the canal and went down into the city.

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I came back to the underground through the dusk of a day grown heavy with red mists hanging like curtains. It was hot, damnably hot, and sick on the mouth and tongue. The houses lay each side of me like sweating and panting dogs.

I came to the underground house where it lay in the middle of trees. I pushed open the garden gate and walked up the narrow path. The windows were quiet, like eyes, they were always watching the path. I stopped suddenly. It would be strange, I thought, if detectives had raided the house and were in there waiting, watching me through the windows. It was a frightening thought. It almost made me turn away and make a run for it. But I quietened my thoughts and hurried on quicker. I took my key from my pocket and inserted it in the door . . . but the door . . . the door swung open and there were men inside. . . .

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Men there were, inside with smirks upon their faces and cocked

guns in their hands. They were detectives of the Special Branch, the Political Police from the city. They smirked and said: 'Come in,' and got hold of me by the lapels. They marched me through the house, through the wreckage of the offices. . . . 'We got your pals,' they said, 'we've got you now. Come on. What's your name?' They wanted me to speak to them, to give them my name, when they had my name and description in their pockets and their papers. . . . But I would not speak to them: we would never answer the police. They sat me down on a bed. 'What is your name?' roared one of them, louder than the others. He was a man with red-streaked eyes, a little fair moustache, a cap and a brown leather raincoat and he was shaking in some way.

'What is your name?' he roared again; but I would not answer him. I just sat with my eyes on the floor. Then he brought his fist up quickly under my chin and levelled me backwards on the bed. I could see nothing but faces spinning around me and his face amongst them, livid and furious. Then he pulled me up off the bed and repeated his question. But I would not answer and he slugged me again and again. Then one of the others stopped him. 'Leave him alone,' he said. 'He'll never talk like that.'

They dragged me away out of the house and I saw squad cars pouring around the corner. They threw me into one of them. I was spitting out bits of teeth on the floor of the car.

The Son of His Father

T. C. WORSLEY

THAT they decided—mother and son—to spend his first half-term week-end attending Rankin's *matinée* was, she felt, a particularly amusing instance of their attitude towards him. For

five years, ever since Eldrich at a precocious nine had been capable of appreciating nuances, they has allowed themselves to treat Rankin as their immensely private, immensely entertaining joke. So private indeed—and consequently so much the more entertaining—that they had never needed to put it into words; it was between them in glances and smiles, in imitations and parodies of his flamboyant, affected, dramatic mannerisms. They could hardly be accused of disloyalty because they did this openly to his face and in front of friends as well as between themselves. And if Rankin didn't mind it in front of himself, why should he mind it behind his back?

Elva's grievance—or one of her grievances—was just that he didn't mind; he didn't seem to see. He seemed to treat their performance as if it were the same sort of flattering attention as the laughs he knew so well how to raise from a company at rehearsal. Or perhaps he did—he must have—perceived the edge on *her* mockery. It was simply that about her he no longer cared. But he might at least have been counted on for some perception over his son. Yet apparently he was too egocentric even for that. He doubtless assumed that he exacted the boy's homage as effortlessly as he exacted his huge public's and would take the child's irony for a form of shy praise. She sometimes wondered whether, supposing he could be brought to realize how subtly and surely Eldrich saw through him, that wouldn't be the one way of slipping under his defences. Once or twice, piqued by some more than usually dense disregard of her feelings in public, she had been tempted to try it out, to lead the boy on to showing their joint hand. But on each occasion Eldrich—he was very young, of course—hadn't, it seemed, quite dared to take her up.

The joke about going to Rankin's *matinée* (it was a special occasion—the opening of an Elizabethan playhouse restored by the beneficence and industry of a well-known patron of the arts) was that their ironical attitude was among their own friends and acquaintances an accepted fact, the force of which could never be quite accurately gauged. For they periodically did something like this, a kind of flaunting of their presence instead of their absence on occasions when it was not particularly called for.

And these occasions acted with a special charm for her as drawing them so publicly close together. It was for her like the open confession of a secret caress, the only relic of the caresses she had loved to lavish on the small, dark, enchanting infant and couldn't any longer on the lanky fourteen-year-old boy. Not that she wanted to now, anyway. She wasn't that kind of mother. On the contrary another of her grievances against Rankin—it was the only one that still between them produced 'rows'—was just that he didn't co-operate with her in helping Eldrich to become a man. Fortunately she herself had an athletic strain in her—it was a relic like her hair of a Northern strain—and this enabled her to introduce him to many of the boyish pastimes which his father, who had been an athlete in his boyhood, might so easily have done if he had cared to. It was left to her to initiate him into rock-climbing and riding, swimming and sailing, all of which at least provided delicious expeditions together at week-ends and in the holidays.

Something of the kind 'they,' their set, would have expected her to organize for Eldrich's first 'week-end' from his first public school term. The joke was, instead, to claim the two complimentary seats which were always available for them at first nights or special occasions; and the sting was made all the sharper by their coming to the decision right on top of one of Rankin's most blatant pieces of neglect.

Eldrich had from the very beginning of his public school life shown great promise at rigger. He had played in the Colts trials and then in the first Colts match, and he expected to be selected for the second. She and Rankin had promised, if he were, to go down and watch the game, and when a telegram came from him confirming his selection, she had gone with the orange form to Rankin's sitting-room. She had pushed open the door and leant against it waiting for some response from him, and while she waited, regarding the great man quizzically, her head—her great blonde fine head—on one side pityingly; after watching him playing the piano for a moment or two without even looking up:

'You haven't forgotten to-morrow, I suppose?'

His forgetting of everything and anything connected with their private life was the one thing, she had lately confided to Eldrich when he was at home, that now kept them in touch. If it weren't for having sometimes to remind him of things, she wondered what call she might ever have for descending to his floor nowadays. For they had not merely their separate rooms but positively their separate floor by this time.

'To-morrow?' He went on playing. The handsome, easily tragic, public face assumed its expression of tired aggrievance.

'Yes, to-morrow. You have an engagement.'

'To-morrow, to-morrow, engagements, engagements. Nothing but engagements.' He banged down the lid of the piano and the overtones sang on as he passed his hand wearily across his eyes in a gesture of infinitely over-harassed preoccupation. Like all his tricks, his poses, his gestures that she flattered herself she knew as well as he did, this simply made her smile without speaking.

'To-morrow's Thursday. Let me see—matinée as usual. Oh yes, of course, there's some big-wig coming. Do you want a seat?'

'To-morrow was the day,' she remained absolutely calm, 'that we were going to watch Eldrich play.'

He slapped his thigh, quite genuinely upset. 'Damn it, I forgot all about it. Why on earth didn't you remind me before. And now I don't see how I can manage it.'

Before she decisively closed the door, she gave him one look.

'You're a wonderful father, I must say.'

II

She didn't conceal from herself that as far as she was concerned Rankin's forgetfulness had its compensations. She had the visit all to herself and, having been brought up among a host of brothers, she was able to participate in all the pleasures of it. Had Rankin been there, she would have been largely taken up with being the famous man's wife: indeed, half the interest of the whole thing would have been dispersed by the focusing

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of attention inwards on his famous, much-photographed profile. Without him she would give herself up to the intensities of Eldrich's own drama and his excitement that she could so readily catch. He only had time for the scrappiest of conversations before dashing off to change; but the vividness of his feeling even then was high enough to communicate itself across to her. On her own account, too, she responded vividly to the scene. The brand new chalk lines down the freshly rolled field, the flags fluttering, the nervous pitch she could sense in the knots of boys adjusting boots or wiping hands on thighs, the arrival of the referee with his blazer and his whistle and his long blast to gather them together, the stripping of scarves and sweaters, the trotting out into position, the flexing of knees and the swinging of arms, the short still moment of crouching before it began, the young captain's shout and the kick-off high into the air. It was a game that she adored. There was nothing for her more exhilarating than to watch these young rams butting each other with all the ferocity of full-grown bulls. She had picked up, too, from her brothers, an appreciation of the finer points of the game. It had been raining that morning and the ground was still wet, though drying in a stiff breeze. The ball would be difficult to handle: it would be, in the first half at least, a forward's game and the school was playing against the wind. Eldrich, at fly-half, was a shade small and light. The opposing pack was the heavier and under the shrewd orders of their captain kept the ball in, wheeled and broke in long, dangerous dribbling rushes, difficult to check. It was largely owing to the dogged 'guts' of the school's squat red-haired scrum-half that the score was kept down below double figures. Time and again they were held by his dropping down on the ball, making nothing of the increasingly rough treatment he provoked as the opposing forwards were time and again frustrated. He was the centre of resistance; and Eldrich's housemaster with whom she was standing loudly acclaimed him. He was one of those middle-aged spectators who are uncontrollable at a game; he kept up an unceasing clamour of advice. 'Fall on the ball! Fall on it!' and 'Oh, well done, man, well *done*! Get round behind him,

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Jeffries, Minchyn round *behind*, man, heads down and shove, shove. Oh, well *done*, well fallen.'

It was a little disappointing that Eldrich with so many chances didn't once, Elva noticed, earn his housemaster's praise. He noticeably didn't fall; he always tried the alternative method, less painful and flashier if it came off, of running across the face of the dribble to pick the ball up from off their feet. Fundamentally unsound, with a greasy ball it was fatal. There was only the one way, as the scrum-half knew and as she herself knew. Major Jenkins left no one in doubt, stamping down with his stick on the ground and letting out anguished cries: 'No, no, fall on it, man, fall! fall!! fall!!!' as Eldrich, skimming sideways, tried to scoop up the ball and only succeeded in conceding another 'knock-on.'

It rather clouded her chat in the interval with the Major, a man of simple and direct enthusiasms who, before the game, had been praising her boy to her in terms she very much liked. 'A promising lad,' he had said. 'It wouldn't surprise me, Mrs. Rankin, if he turns out to be one of our best.' Now it was a different story. 'I wish that young beggar of yours would learn to fall on the ball.' He went off, shaking his head, to give detailed advice to the muddy circle of players sucking their lemons in the centre of the ground.

Meanwhile the sun had come out and the ground was rapidly drying; in the second half the nature of the game altered and the school forwards with the wind behind them now got a fair share of the ball. They were a good pack who heeled cleanly and gave the outsiders a chance: and here the school had a clear superiority. Eldrich had a good pair of hands and an eye for an opening and he worked in well with his scrum-half. The school drew level with three quick tries, none of them converted, and then, while they still had the impetus, in the enemy's twenty-five Eldrich sold his opponent a perfect dummy and went through between the posts. The conversion put them five points up and they clung to the lead. Though the enemy got one other try, it was far out by the touch line and when the final whistle went, the school side had won by the extra two points. The major's

equanimity was quite restored; as he shook hands with Eldrich's mother he didn't mind admitting to her that he already had the boy in mind for a perfect one day. But for her it wasn't quite so simple. She couldn't get out of her mind the two pictures, one of the stocky scrum-half in the close-in *mêlée* of the forward game repeatedly throwing his body at the forward's boots: he was—a real little *man*; the other was of Eldrich in the open field selling his dummy to the general applause: he was—the son of this father.

Perhaps even Eldrich felt it a little as afterwards they ate scrambled eggs and cakes at the local Victoria Café. Certainly he was a little 'down,' and his tone in regretting that his father hadn't come was distinctly wistful. It was then that she had had her idea and had switched the conversation to plans for his half-term leave. She turned over one or two possibilities, climbing in Wales or riding in the New Forest, before she put the suggestion to him:

'Rankin has something rather special on that Saturday: they've restored an Elizabethan theatre. He's to make a speech and do the last two acts of *Macbeth*. How would you like us to put in an appearance?'

Whatever clouds there had been before disappeared at that, though it was only subsequently, in going over the whole thing, that she asked herself whether even then there hadn't been more enthusiasm and less irony than usual in his whole-hearted:

'Yes. Let's.'

III

The reopening of the Mermaid Theatre was an English occasion. A minor Royal Personage arrived in a Daimler. The Mayor and his aldermen did their best to dignify the centre of the picture but somehow were always edged out by the quiet distinction of the Peer who had from London created the fund that was putting them unexpectedly in the limelight. It was to him rather than to them that the local notabilities gravitated, when it wasn't, as Elva noticed, to Rankin. Most of the crowd

that gathered had come for the experience of seeing *him* in the flesh: and it was on occasions such as this that he was at his most brilliant best. Modest but striking, charming but visibly great, he had, she couldn't deny, the happiest knack of enchanting an audience, by treating them as equals, by raising them to the level of his own enthusiasm. For he did really care. The Mayor was facetious and fumbling in introducing the Royalty who herself was official and formal. The distinguished Peer was inclined to be portentous and talked from above to below. It was only when Rankin, the last speaker, got up that the thing became alive; it wasn't, either, only by means of the tricks of his charm that he did it—the carefully studied and rehearsed technique for putting himself across. They were there, of course, and they were used. Every one of them she knew in its smallest detail. She felt she could have predicted to the last inflection and the least movement what effects he was to produce. As she sat among the distinguished visitors in the front row she was playing all the time with Eldrich her favourite game of numbering them off and anticipating their results, and even at the more outrageous of his devices nudging her companion's knee.

He was appealing for money and he was throwing himself completely into the part of a beggar. He wasn't one of those actors who are too anxious to be thought gentlemen to let themselves go. He conducted an auction; and the public, to whom he was only known as a tragedian, were delighted to discover his gift for the comic. 'Pure music hall!' Elva may have been whispering to Eldrich, but that didn't account for the brilliance with which he did it. They ate, as they say, out of his hand; he came down into the auditorium stuffing into bulging pockets the cheques and bank notes that they fell over one another to pass over to him.

To the storm of applause that finished this part of the performance Eldrich's hands contributed a full share, and the unselfconscious smile with which he turned to her seemed almost menacingly proprietary. Her customary 'Wonderful, isn't it?' that meant between them so much, so much of reservation, of ironic surprise at *his* getting away with it yet again was met this

time—or was it only the first time she had noticed it?—with an open-hearted response, 'He's wonderful, isn't he?'

In the interval which was then planned to give the actors time to dress, congratulations flowed in to them across the tea-cups and the cakes, and when they became separated she couldn't in spite of several attempts succeed in catching Eldrich's eye. She began to worry. She couldn't help observing with what shining eyes he listened to the praise that was pouring in. Where was that little distance, she found herself wondering, that little space which they had always managed to keep clear round themselves, to prevent their being stifled by the pressure of flattery? It was either that or they were done, the boy especially—she had long since decided that; and the fear touched her in passing that Eldrich was now going under.

This sense, the uneasy sense of a situation slipping dangerously towards some impossible line, became increasingly pronounced as the afternoon advanced. She became positively impatient with Eldrich. Naturally Rankin was brilliant in the acts which followed. It had always gone without saying. Then why did Eldrich find it necessary to say it now, to keep on saying it, and to say it with those ingenuous doe-like eyes of his wide with innocent enthusiasm. She found it almost insufferable. If the boy hadn't learnt by now, after all she had done to prepare him for it, when was he going to learn? Was he going to turn out, above all dreadful things, to be simply as willing a victim as all the others?

But she came to the conclusion as soon as the play was over, when they had gone round to Rankin's dressing-room and then taken a taxi together to the station and found their compartment in the special train, that she wasn't being fair to the boy. He *was* only a boy and Rankin—it must be admitted—was fiendishly good at his job. He had had a moment when they first joined him in his dressing-room of seeming to be surprised at the boy's genuinely flattering enthusiasm before he settled himself down into the father's role and played it—that again she had to admit—with a subtlety that no other living actor could have managed. His wasn't a mere impersonation of the conventional

version of a father: he *was* a father. How could Eldrich, who hadn't, as she had, lived beside every change of intonation for sixteen years, be expected to discriminate? He only—when she came down to it—had her word for it. But even while she defended him there remained a bitter taste. He only had her word for it—but wasn't that enough? Apparently it wasn't, for Eldrich, open-mouthed, drank in the answers which his father was readily and patiently giving to the hundred-and-one questions which the son now reeled off, as if he had been starved of asking them for years. He wanted to know all about the mechanics of production, the technique of acting, how you remembered your part, the business of make-up. And to the simplicity of the questions Rankin responded as carefully, as accurately, as fully, as amusingly, as if his interlocutor were a serious student or a famous critic. Certainly he had never, in a career filled with triumphs, had so absorbed an audience. Elva put it to herself, as they moved up the corridor to the dining car, that never had an audience been more at his mercy.

For the first time that she had ever seen it Rankin was positively perfunctory with the notables at the other tables; he was too absorbed in his own performance in which he had now, she noticed, shifted the stress. He was now—to perfection still—playing the perfect listener, drawing Eldrich out about his school life. She had certainly never heard the boy talk more freely; she had thought their own companionship an absolutely unreserved one, yet she found that she had never been given the confidences Rankin was succeeding in eliciting. Names of boys and stories about masters, incidents, opinions, even speculations, these in their close communion of shared smiles and small understandings had simply never come up. It cost her a pang now to hear them tumbling out at the first friendly smile from *him*. Yet even while she put it to herself like that she found that, to be fair—and she was fair by nature—the situation before her very eyes was moving into reverse.

Eldrich was telling his father about his rugger, describing the Colts games and the part he had played in them. When he came to the last one, the one she had watched, she observed that he

became more hesitant than he had been before; the flow of unselfconscious talk faltered as if, perhaps, he suddenly became aware that he might not here, unless he was careful, be able to count so surely on his father's good will. He didn't stop, but he began to be evasive, to feel his way, to grope. And she noticed, too, how Rankin, with his acute talent, picked up at once the fumble and eased the boy's way.

'I didn't enjoy it so much. It somehow went wrong . . .'
Eldrich hesitantly began. 'It was one of those wet days to begin with . . .'

'I know them,' Rankin said easily; 'the ball like a greased plate and no grip in your fingers. First one "knock-on" and then another. And then from bad to worse.'

'That's just it,' Eldrich's surprised pleasure at his father's sympathy and the renewed confidence which followed from it, seemed to Elva almost perverse. Didn't she, anyhow, appreciate these niceties just as well as Rankin did?

'We got nothing of the ball to start with. It was just forwards' rushes all the time and they were a beastly heavy lot.' Then he added tentatively, 'I don't think I'm much good at that kind of game.' It was, as Elva saw, a crucial moment. It even held Rankin up for a moment: he filled in the interval by preparing a pipe, a property that she had often noticed him carrying, though she had never seen him complete the 'business' by smoking it.

'Perhaps it isn't only a question just of their weight,' Rankin proceeded to treat the boy as a man of the world. 'Isn't it also their hidden hate? They despise us outsiders as a spectacular sort of fly-by-nights—exhibitionists—actors——' Father and son exchanged here a smile of shared confidence—'just as we regard them as clumsy sorts of navvies, there only to do the heavy work while we do the skilled.'

The boy evidently from his laugh recognized this feeling, but it brought up another difficulty. 'That only makes it all the harder, though. You know they're out to get their own back.'

'True. But you know the trick, don't you?'

'I don't think so.'

'Oh, it's easy enough. It's no good just dropping and lying

there to be kicked like some of those scrum-halves. I was given the tip by Cheesman—England's five caps in '12 and '13. Hunch your shoulders, tuck in your head and launch the ram straight at their shins. Bring 'em off their feet. They can't kick you when they're on their backs. Straight for their shins with your shoulder, gather the ball as you go, crooked under the arm like this. Got it? Over they go and you're through the wave and out the other side—with the ball as well.'

The boy listened with the closest absorption; and there were a hundred things that followed from this, technical points, that he made his father explain—did you do it like this or like that? And what about the tackle—at the knees or the ankles? He never seemed to get his hand-off quite right; was there something special to look for there—until presently he was pulling out his crested fixture card and saying: 'You know, you simply must come down and watch the next one. Really you must.' Rankin, charmed with his enthusiasm, produced his engagement book and turned the pages with an indulgent smile.

They neither of them noticed Elva's getting up; they hardly heard her plea of train-sickness. She couldn't bear another moment of it. The situation she had feared would have been bad enough. She had been preparing all Eldrich's life against that, against the danger from Rankin's charm and his ferocious skill: a defenceless boy could so easily be seduced by them. But the situation in reverse was simply not to be borne. For what had become overwhelmingly clear to her as they compared their calendars across the table was just that it was the boy now who was out to seduce him.

The last thing she heard—and as she pushed her way down the corridor it echoed in her head as a final confirmation of the injustice of her whole situation—was Rankin saying: 'Yes, it was damned annoying about that. Your mother should really have reminded me.'

The Declining Nude

QUENTIN CRISP

ONE lunch time, when I was lying stark naked on the throne of Hammersmith School of Art, a strange, fawn-like creature came and breathed down the back of my neck.

'Are you a model?' said he to me.

'What d'yer think?' said I to him.

Then he told me that some of the younger members of the profession had decided that there ought to be a Models' Union. They were going to hold a meeting—he almost said 'an underground meeting'—about this.

'What for?' I asked.

'Chiefly to raise the wages of models,' the fawn replied.

'What for?' I asked again and he disappeared—presumably back into one of Mr. Odet's plays. The Union has now, however, been formed and the wages raised. Being a model is a job that requires no references, no training, no previous experience, no specific ability—not even a thought in your head and yet you can now earn 4s. an hour, 30s. a day, £7 10s. a week. What more can you ask?

A German sculptor once told me that in Italy models start their careers at fifteen and graduate to the college in Rome. At the age of twenty-five they are considered superannuated whereupon most of them marry and marry well.

In France and in Germany a model has a social status somewhere between those of an actress and a prostitute. In England a model is merely a typist who was lonely, a dancer who was inadequate or a down-and-out who was bored. 'Doubtless,' said the sculptor, 'their characters are above reproach.'

I would say that the qualities required of a model are these, and that this is the order of their importance.

Punctuality. In this word I would include reliability, sobriety

and the ability to refrain from talking or in any way inflicting one's personality on the artists and students.

Repose. 'Teach us to sit still even between these blue rocks.' (Or is that not what Mr. Eliot says?) When Suggia sat for Mr. Augustus John it is said that she went right on playing her 'cello. This may be true, but it was a great mistake to let the story get around.

Definition. This is a term understood best by readers of *Health and Strength* in the pages of which magazine such expressions as 'remarkable definition' are used in praise of certain athletes whose muscles are pronounced and clear-cut. In a slightly different way, the term can also be used of women, although some female models, I regret to say, have no definition. I remember that a friend of mine, when told that a certain Miss K . . . had become a model, cried out, 'But she can't. She's just something that hangs down from her head.'

The ability to pose. About which one of my more unkind acquaintances said to me, 'Surely it is easier for you to pose than not.' But I do not mean either what he meant, nor even the capacity for making of one's limbs a pattern that has unity, harmony and clarity. 'The body,' an art master once said in my hearing, 'is a gravity-resisting mechanism.' And it is possible for a model to demonstrate this—to create with his body various problems of anatomical perspective.

Looks. For a commercial artist models must be moderately pretty girls and handsome Englishmen of normal proportions so that, without necessarily bothering to aim at a likeness, he can use them as they are and does not have consciously to translate them into those terms of publicity in which everything is younger, brighter and more worth the money.

Very pretty girls and wildly handsome young men can become photographic models and earn at least a £1 a time and this does not mean a £1 a day. A photographic model may with luck have an appointment with a commercial art studio at some quite reasonable hour of the day and some quite accessible address where he may find the whole set-up ready for him as though he were a leading actor. All he has to do is place his arm round some

unknown girl, gaze with her into a perambulator, wait for the click, collect the money and go. If the set-up is elaborate and he has to be taken to Hampstead Heath and photographed with his majestic foot on the running board of a purring limousine he is paid extra.

Like most actors a model starts his career in the suburbs or even in the provinces and gradually wins his way to the heart of London. I began by doing a term in Derby. I took sticks of salt and strings of glass beads with which to do barter with the natives in the hope that in exchange they would show me a narrow path between the overhanging factories to the art school. Everyone said that I would never live through this excursion to Derby, but Derby it was that died.

After the provinces, the suburbs; Willesden, Wimbledon, Walthamstow. In a sense these schools offer the best 'sittings' a model can hope to secure because the buildings are so well heated and so well arranged (with a lavatory in the model's dressing-room). The school at Walthamstow is like a modern dream. Built in open, almost wild, country, it rises pillar after pillar, portico over portico into the sky and before it is a tremendous sweep of wide stone steps ending in a bed of nettles.

With the London schools, the rule is that the more venerable the establishment is, the more ill-equipped, dim and dusty. The dirt, however, is compensated for by accessibility and a certain atmosphere of sophistication.

But at all schools wherever they are situated the ritual is much the same. Arriving about ten minutes before the class is due to start the model calls at the office to sign in a book his name and, in very big schools, the name of the master for whom he is about to work. Then he climbs to the top of the building to the 'Life' room, a large room with a wooden floor and a few 'donkeys' and easels strewn about and, perhaps, even a few students. The atmosphere is like that of the reptile house at the Zoo. It smells of hot metal. In a dim corner of the room about two square feet are screened or curtained off. Here the model strips. Male models strip fully only in German schools. In England—and even in

Paris—models wear a loin cloth. By the time the model emerges the art master may have arrived to set the pose. The model steps on to the 'throne' which is a small rostrum something like eighteen inches high and receives instructions which vary from an almost inaudible and totally indifferent phrase to the most elaborate description of the position required. On one of the first days of my life as a model I remember that an art master said wearily: 'Take it easy. All you've got to do is sit.' On the other hand, one of the famous art masters at St. Martin's School asked me to lie with chest facing downwards and hips lying on their side. I put my elbows on the throne and threw my abdomen into the air like a dying salmon but it did not land on its side, so then I lay on my side and threw my thorax around. It did not fall prone. Standing over me with arms folded the master said: 'So you can't do it.' At moments like this I try to think of that woman who posed as Ophelia for Mr. Millais. She lay for hours at a time clothed in a bath full of water and, when the apparatus for keeping the water warm failed, she refrained from disturbing the master by mentioning the fact. She died of pneumonia. I admire her more than I can say, for even poses that are not partially submerged are, after about the first twenty minutes, excruciating. Once the pose is set a hush falls on the room—at least while the art master is present, and late arrivals, which includes almost the whole class, are welcomed in mime by those already seated. A little work and a little whispering fill in the next hour until the art master calls out: 'Time, thank you,' and very slowly the model begins to move.

When a bomb was dropped on Goldsmiths' College and all the windows of the life room fell in, I remained motionless. When the students had risen from the floor and dusted themselves they congratulated me on my stoicism—my adherence to the Casabianca tradition. But, of course, the fact is that, after remaining in one position for an hour, it is impossible to make a sudden movement. Indeed, sometimes it is impossible to move at all. At such times as these the art master undoes the model like a deck chair and, as with a deck chair, he is always liable to get you inside out. Speaking of Yoga, a model once said to

me: 'But once they've kept their arms over their heads for a while it is easier to leave them there than to bring them down. I think Yoga is just a life of self-indulgence.'

After the agony of relaxation for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, the agony of getting back into the pose again for fifty minutes or three-quarters of an hour. And so on through alternate forms of suffering for seven hours a day for five days a week for fifty years, perhaps.

But all the same posing has a very definite lure. For one thing, it is scandalous without being dangerous; for another, it is something you do with your body. The attraction of physical labour does not require Mr. Lawrence to publicize it.

Once there was a Polish model of a beauty like the sun and on the second day of a continuous painting sitting at the Royal Academy School one of the students said to her, 'But last week Miss J., you had your left foot just a little bit further back.' Without moving a muscle Miss J. looked down from the throne and said: 'I know I did. And what a damned fool I was.'

But there is a penalty for such an attitude as this. To female models posing is boring. When, in order to be paid, I rushed to the cashier's desk in St. Martin's School, I found two girls before me. While I waited behind them the older said to the younger: 'Well, d'you like posing?'

'Does anybody?' said the younger to the older.

'It's a way of filling in time,' was the reply and I couldn't help adding: 'between now and the grave.'

When some years ago a model at last achieved by committing suicide that fame she had failed to win by posing, a journalist, who had herself once been a model, wrote an article entitled 'Too Much Time to Think.'

In a gallant effort to counteract boredom, the artist or art master always praises the model on the same principle as that which urges you to praise your charwoman. 'No one can get the sink as clean as you can, Mrs. Phipps.' For male models praise is not considered necessary. They are stimulated by posing and they, presumably, do not wait so eagerly either for the altar or the grave. True, the professor at one of the universities sighs in

automatic ecstasy before absolutely every model but then, if you cut the heart out of a dog-fish and fling it on the deck, it beats for eight hours. As a rule a male model receives from masters a few words of hearty commiseration, but even these are perfunctory.

At Toynbee Hall there is a four-hour sitting from six till ten in the evening, at the beginning of which a model was asked if he could not stand with arms outstretched 'in a kind of crucifixion pose.'

'Willingly,' the man replied, 'but I died after only three hours the last time, you remember.'

It comes to this. You can either take easy poses and die of boredom or difficult poses and die of an enlarged heart. 'To each is given what defeat he will.' But whatever you do you do for the sake of the art master and not for the sake of the students. The situation is the opposite of what you would imagine. The art masters, thin, bespectacled, Gothic, who, you would imagine, would be academic, conventional and chiefly concerned for the reputation of the school are, in practice, eager for new models in new positions. They are even gay. When, on being asked for a quick pose by one art master, I climbed up on to the top of a pillar and hitched one of my feet on to a picture rail, he said to the class: 'All right. Now draw that. Wings optional.' The students, though young and dressed in primary colours, are sluggish and blank as the grave though not as quiet. In Goldsmiths' College there is a curtain rail just within reach over one of the thrones and I offered, if some object could be found with which to raise my heels a little, to hang on to this rail in a crucifixion pose. 'My piece of paper isn't long enough,' one of the students said.

To each generation it seems that the next generation that is growing up under its feet is strangely lacking in enthusiasm but, in actual fact, it is only that the focal point of enthusiasm has shifted. Now art is left high and dry and aeroplanes are all the rage.

A terrible wave of what might be called 'Penguin culture' engulfed Europe during the last phase of the war and either

because of this or because of the grants that the Government is distributing like confetti among demobilized art students an art rush has set in, from which only Mr. Chaplin is missing. Gone are the dignified days when an intending student visited the Principal with specimens of his work tucked underneath his arm and was advised as to what classes to attend. Now, on the first day of the session, a howling mob of would-be students waving their Government grants above their heads clamours at the doors of every art school in the country. When at ten o'clock the doors are open the crowd rushes in and up the stairs and sits down wherever it can. And if you happen to sit down in the lavatory that is what you study for that term.

But all this is not a direct expression of enthusiasm for art or even for the life of an artist. What happens is this. A day comes when Daddy says: 'And what are you going to do when you go out into the great big world, Esmeralda?' and Esmeralda thinks: 'O God. He's going to talk about work. I shall have to become a typist.' Then she remembers that she can do art and the shadow lifts. For a while she can wear a Hungarian blouse and sandals; she can visit the galleries; she can buy expensive books from Zwemmers; she can make a lot of amusing enemies of her own age. The school of art becomes a castle from which occasionally she rushes out to fire a few culture-poisoned arrows at her parents but it does not become a seat of learning. She attends the life class, but I would not say that she does life drawing and, even if she were mad about drawing from the figure, she might be unaware of the model's existence. If I address the class from the throne I produce an effect as though a chest of drawers had spoken. This state of affairs creates an interesting situation for the model who is thus present and absent at the same time. I have heard conversations between students which I cannot believe an outsider can have been meant to hear.

'And Laurence or Lionel or Leslie . . . Do you know any Leslies?'

'Yes . . . I know two.'

'Are they nice?'

'Wonderful.'

or again, more extraordinary, though less intimate:

'Do you still belong to the Spinsters' Union, Jean?'

'Yes. But I've been so busy lately that I haven't had time to get anything done.'

Some models are irritated by the students' indifference both to them, personally, and to art, and have been known to lean down from the throne and hiss: 'Get on with your work.' I can't think why. The model arrives, suffers, is paid and leaves, but none the less the students are one reason why some models prefer private posing. Another reason is that through private work they may find themselves in the presence of a 'great man.' This apparently is a very powerful stimulus. And to the end of time some models will recount with pleasure conversations of the slightest significance that they have had the privilege of holding with Whistler, John, and such. To me it is precisely the conversation that is the trouble. I once posed for a sculptor who spent all day asking me questions about my private life. It was all very gay but, when the time came for me to receive 15s. we both felt a little foolish.

And another thing. Private sittings are so cold.

Most studios are equipped with a stove—often a very efficient one—but to a model this is a most unsatisfactory source of heat. It is immovable but not necessarily constant. Over the question of heat a contradiction arises that is hard to resolve. Models are willing to assume excruciating poses, but they are not willing to suffer from cold. Perhaps it is because the positions are active suffering (if such a term may be permitted)—are something the models must do themselves—whereas the temperature is something that thoughtless artists allow to happen to their employees.

This is the tragedy of contemporary models. We do not believe in the *vie de Bohème*. It is modernism that is the cause of this. Aimed as a jovial sock on the jaw of the public, abstraction in art has, without even knowing it, pierced to the heart this small, uncomprehending group of people.

Now that 'reclining nude' is any bit of old wood with a hole in it, things are easier for the sculptor; more difficult for the public; hopeless for the model. (This article might almost be

called *La Mort de Bohème*.) I doubt whether the artist's idea of himself is very different now from what it was in any other age. The black hat, worn at the utmost obliquity, the beard you could scrub the sink with, and the corduroy clothes are only worn by a few ghosts who parade the dim, rococo streets of Fitzrovia, but doubtless the artist still feels he is the unacknowledged legislator of the world. And the public? It is still as indignant as ever and as shocked. But for the model no such historic continuity is possible. From La Fornarina and Tomaso de Cavalieri down to Dolores there is an unbroken line of beautiful, fatal creatures whose personality, glimpsed in their eye-lids, or their hair, lured some artist on to this, that and the other. 'With my paint brush I thee worship.' These models co-operated, however passively, in the production of works of art. In the case of Dolores there was even a young man to commit suicide leaving behind him a poem.

Goldsmiths' College is now no more than a picturesque ruin. The roof is a piece of tarpaulin held over your head by a few bombed-out students. When it rains, it rains on you; when it is foggy, it is as bad inside the building as out in the street. And a day came when a really thick fog fell veil upon veil over Lewisham and over Goldsmiths' College. There is no longer any electricity there so, as it grew darker and darker, the students merely gave up working and went into a corner to talk about Frank Sinatra till only one person was left still painting (a charming Victorian gentleman who, for some unknown reason, always wore waders). When the model became aware that she was posing for only one person she could bear no more. 'Oh, Mr. W., you can't *see* to paint any more. It's too *dark*,' she protested languidly.

'There can be no darkness,' replied Mr. W. 'so deep but your beauty would translumine it.' For a moment in these words the grail that glimmered before the anguished eyes of Saskia and Mrs. Holman Hunt glows once more.

'My wot?' drawled the model. 'O . . . My . . . beauty.'

Down in the Forest Something Stirred

GWYN JONES

A GREAT black doubleclap of thunder tore itself from the heart of flame in the dead maw, the hell-gape, the tree-toothed swallow of the oak-apple-starred, the moss-and-ivy-haired, the dead-bough-fingered woods of Supra Maelor. From its fiery centre it spread and bellowed through the piny aisles, the down-drooped bowing birches, the gnarled goblin thickets of the oak. Its uprush shook down branches, made the leaves rain, and a thousand birds rose into the dark with a whirring of wings and with frightened and discordant voices. A double-barrel echo rapped from the mountains and rolled under the sky. Then the noise swooned away, the trees were shrouded in a midnight hush, and soon the birds ceased from cheeping and chirking, and silence settled upon the wood.

‘——,’ said a human voice.

John Lot Padog, the weasel-jawed, fish-eyed, horse-mouthed poacher of Hedgerose Cottage, had tripped on a keeper’s wire and discharged both barrels of his shotgun.

Within the parish of Supra Maelor, two men that night watched for a sign, listened for a wonder. The first of these was Manmoel Pliny-Evans, who lived in the stable loft of the empty bleak mansion of Capsant. He had lived there for ten years now, a saint subsided from a varnished pew and the linoleum smells of holiness. A mild and modest man enough, he could neither understand why he alone of human kind might expect to inherit God’s crystal houses, nor why the Lord should have made his ungreased tongue the vial of His truth. It grieved him to think of that universal error to which his fellows subscribed, that the Garden of Eden was not visible in their midst, and that the mischievous apple tree no longer bore forbidden fruit amidst the lesser vegetables of Supra Maelor. For had he not seen it

there, and had he not seen the stoat lie down with the rabbit alongside its bole? O blind generation of men, blindest since Pharaoh shut the lids of his heart against the showings of Moses! O dim and dusty vessels emptied of blessedness! And now mankind stood within eight nights of damnation, for by dividing all the letters in Genesis by the chapters of Deuteronomy, by adding Micah and subtracting Amos, he had found the exact day in this our year when the unbruised serpent would again tempt Eve to eat of the apple. And so far no man with faith and firearm had joined with him to shoot and slay. Always contempt and the eye-slidings of Sion. How long O Lord how long? He prayed for one disciple, one man of wrath, his red-palmed, knob-knuckle hands stretched out over the forest, his beatific basin of a face tilted on the long-strung neck. Send me the thunder and the lightning. Send me a sign!

High on the shoulder of the opposite hill Gellius Sant-Owen surveyed the velvet blackness of the low-breathing forest. His breadth from deltoid to deltoid was as his length from occiput to kneeball. Nine jowls depended below his toadstool ears, his belly he bore as on a trolley before him. It was Sant-Owen's cross that he had never looked the ascetic he was, the smasher of flesh-pots, the contemner of groaning trestles, the feeder on bread and chestnuts and wholesome pulse which trumpet their warnings against gluttony and surfeit. One luxury only did he permit himself, a sweet apple from the heart of the wood. For seven years now he had lived the life of a solitary in the battered sanctuary of Monkhole, high above the parish, and because the bats in his belfry wore the faces of wolves it was rare for any to seek him out. Yet there were times, and they had grown more frequent of late, when it seemed to him a sorry thing that all Supra Maelor should burn, and he with no butty in heaven. Not one from amongst so many? Not one just man in Sodom? He would not indeed ask that Sodom be spared, but oh for one sound apple in the barrel! Why not to-night? From his high hill, his broken doorway, and his full five feet of height he called on providence. Send me the earthquake, the voice of the whirlwind. Send me a sign!

The forest lit and split below them.

John Lot Padog had reached Hedgerose Cottage. Twice and thrice he scratched on his own back door till the gold-browed Becca, with whom he lived in tally, opened the window and looked down on him. She expected blasts, roars, and curses, when after some delay she let him in, but it was with soft-stepping feet and humble mien that he crossed the threshold and nuzzled in under the yellow light.

'What a strange look you wear,' she cried nervously. 'Did the keeper shoot you up? I heard a roaring in the forest.'

'Becca,' he said, blinking forward, 'I have seen the Glory of the Lord.'

Had he seen the Emperor of Africa's tigers she would not have been surprised. Yet when she sniffed it was only the well-known odours of dung and tobacco and gunpowder that seeped from off him, and nothing of strong drink.

'It was in the wood,' he continued, 'when I tripped over a wire put down by Jenkins—and for that may I soon see his throat cut from shoulder to shoulder. My gun went off, both barrels, and you will see from a dozen holes in my hat-brim and as many in my coat-sleeves that I was as near as ninepence to croaking myself. Becca,' he said earnestly, 'do up your nightshirt across your neck, for my thoughts are turned to religion. When the barrels went off and I was still falling, I seemed to be falling into hell. What wasn't red was black, and the brimstone was full of my nostrils. I knew at that moment what it is to fear the Pit, and as I dodged and crawled and side-stepped home, lest I meet with Jenkins and be led to club him, I determined that if the Lord spared me till morning I would go to talk either with Pliny-Evans, at Capsant, or the hermit Sant-Owen, up at Monk-hole. I split no wishbones over it, Becca, I have been vouchsafed a vision, and I am not the man to shut my eyes to my own advantage.'

'Lot,' replied Becca, her voice deep and trembling as she thought of Jenkins then hiding in the big black coffer upstairs,

'what are our bodies compared with our souls? Why wait for the morning? The sooner, the safer. Why not visit one of the reverends to-night?'

'Alas, Becca, who am I to make my affairs a mote in the Lord's left eye? Besides, it is after one o'clock and I am disposed to slumber. But get you back to bed, my dove. I have a mind to sleep to-night like a little child, humbly, among the dogs.'

'I had myself expected an undisturbed night,' Becca admitted, 'and will keep you no longer. Ah, that Jenkins,' she scolded, 'it's little sleep he'll get this night if wishes of mine count for anything!'

Lot's boots fell thumping into the hearth. 'You are a good girl, Becca, though something of a slut, and nothing is too good for you. And that I may be revenged on Jenkins, may all your wishes come true.'

'Amen to that!' cried Becca, and her two white feet, like two white frogs, went pap-pap-pap up the ladder staircase.

It was with no surprise that Gellius Sant-Owen, trundling his tunbelly from the door of Monkhole, saw mounting towards him the rat-brow and rabbit-shoulders of John Lot Padog. He had been awaiting a disciple since cockcrow, and could hardly brush the bubbles from his mouth as his caller opened his case to him. 'And thou has come, brother, to the one man in this soon-to-be-damned parish of Supra Maelor who can set thy face to the hills. Praise the Lord!'

'Praise the Lord,' said John Lot Padog.

'As to thy sins, forget them. Too long hast thou been dandled in the Fiend's bosom, and no present wickedness corrupts so much as memory. Do henceforth as I do, and all will be well.'

Surveying the bull's bulk of his preceptor, Lot thought indeed it might.

'When thou gettest home, first despatch from thy side that bundle of love, that load of delight, thy concubine. For the future thou shalt know nothing of woman. Thy night lines thou shalt set behind the fire, and thy rod thou must splinter over thy knee.'

Thy musket thou shalt smash against a stone, and thy great salmon gaff thou shalt break in three pieces with a hammer I will lend thee. Give over strong drink and live in innocence on turnips and water, and then,' said Sant-Owen, cleaving his huge chaps with a grin of benevolence, 'thou wilt have begun to taste on earth those joys which are laid up for thee throughout eternity.'

'But, reverend,' said Lot, 'it is surely good scripture that the limb which is not used withereth away, and nothing could be more incommoding to man than your counsel—or less considerate of woman. Besides, is it for any one of us to hide his talent? Are there not rabbits that prey on the fields, and pheasants that guzzle the good corn?'

'Dost bandy scripture with me, brother?' asked Sant-Owen, baring his broad brown tusks. 'Wouldst teach thy grandmother to suck eggs?'

'Eggs or no eggs,' cried Lot, 'are there no salmon to gaff, no trout to tickle, in heaven?'

'Not in my heaven, brother. Thou art thinking, I can see, of the inferior and watery heaven of the Baptists. Brother,' he wheedled in a voice like a waterfall, 'is it better to believe or burn? Tell me that.'

'A good question, reverend, but I am not without theology myself and I shall now go to Capsant to consult Pliny-Evans as to a less desperate salvation.'

'Pliny-Evans!' shouted Sant-Owen, his belly bouncing off his knees; 'that lugworm, that seagull's dung, that tail of a tadpole! Wouldst trust thy soul to him? Bibulous adulterer—ah, rightly art thou called Lot.'

'You have the wrong end of the stick, reverend. For when I was born, a thirteenth child, and my father said, "Let him be John," my mother said, "Yes, and let him be the lot," and so I am John Lot Padog. But I will split no wishbones here, and offer you good-day.'

'Ay, go thou to Pliny-Evans, that goose's rump, and if in a week the devil have thee not by the heels, then 'tis I and not thou that am damned.'

'Amen to that!' cried John Lot Padog, and his heron-legs and web-feet bore him swiftly down the hill.

.

If Gellius Sant-Owen had awaited a disciple since cockcrow, Pliny-Evans had kept watch since the badger cried under the hill. It was with rapture that he beheld the flap and shuffle of John Lot Padog towards him, with exultation that he heard his duck-lips question of sin and salvation.

'My son,' he replied, placing his finger-tips together along the ledges of his nose to form a small arch of holiness for his words to bow through, 'the mercy of God is infinite. Now your sins are not infinite, in that they are but too well measured and known. Therefore I do not doubt that your case comes well within the compass of the Almighty. But it will be necessary for you to do penance, if only to show some seriousness in the affair.'

Lot nodded warily. 'I ask only that the penance shall be such as my weakness can bear.' And he spoke of Sant-Owen.

'It is not for me,' said Pliny-Evans charitably, 'to speak ill of Sant-Owen. The Lord made him, no doubt for some purpose as yet unapparent. That he is mad, oaf-headed, and a stuff-guts, and has unsound ideas about the Book of Genesis, may therefore be ultimately intended for good. Perhaps he was sent into the world as a warning. However! I understand, son Lot, that you would not choose to live in blameless chastity?'

'I am thinking of Becca, reverend, and how any neglect of mine might imperil her virtue. For my own part——'

'The point is well made. Your night lines then?'

'Is it not good scripture, reverend, that Satan finds work for idle hands to do? It is not for me to teach you your own business, reverend, but Sant-Owen could do as well as that.'

'The point has substance,' Pliny-Evans admitted hurriedly. He thought a while. 'Could you give up strong drink?'

'What a hard man you are grown to be, reverend! I had really best return and make my peace at Monkhole. If I must be made a pig of, then why not go the whole hog with Sant-Owen?'

'Stop, stop,' cried Pliny-Evans, catching at Lot's jacket.

'Your case grows clear to me. Do you, my son, ever make use of water?'

'Water?' asked Lot reproachfully. 'What is this with you now? No man has a cleaner record against water than I.'

Pliny-Evans rattled his teeth for joy. 'Then you are already by way of obtaining your robe in heaven. Your penance is never to drink water. Be strong, be resolute, have great faith, and all will be well.'

'Reverend,' said Lot with humility, 'what a thing is true religion!' But his eyelids drooped to behold the new nervousness of Pliny-Evans. 'True religion,' he repeated, 'without a catch in it.'

'Praise the Lord,' said Pliny-Evans absently. 'You have,' he remarked, 'a firearm or arquebus?'

'You mean a blunderbuss. No, but I have my shotgun.' Lot slid his eyes round the steepes and declivities of his interlocutor's face. 'Why?'

'And you know an apple tree in the heart of the wood?'

'I did my courting there. But why?'

'Listen!' Hand to brow, Pliny-Evans scanned the yard, the hill, the forest, and the sky. 'I will tell you.'

He did, and the red fox-hair of Padog stood straight up on his head.

Exactly a week later a round black object descended the hill that stood to the east of Supra Maelor. It felt the strong pulls of wrath and gravity, and it proceeded by such headlong rushes and temporary arrests as mark the progress of a barrel down a stumpy bank. Now it rolled smoothly forward, now it fetched up against a tree or a turn in the path, then again it bounded onwards, momentarily a missile in space. A panting and a rumbling surrounded it at every stage. As it drew nearer to the waiting Becca who had been gleaning eggs from the out-layers of the parish farms, it was revealed first as a fat rock falling, then as a solid balloon, and at last as the swagged jelly-body of Gellius Sant-Owen. The hermit of Monkhole was on his way to celebrate the damnation of John Lot Padog.

'Woman,' he demanded, confronting Becca like a vision of four Deadly Sins, 'what news of Padog the poacher? Has he been gathered to hell in a flame, or was he a lollipop betwixt the teeth of Beelzebub?'

'Reverend,' said Becca, 'I never knew him better in all his life. Religion has made a new man of him. All he does now is smoke and drink and clear his traps and wait on the Glory to be.'

Then am I damned? thought Sant-Owen. Did I speak a true word? And is that heat in my feet? 'Woman—Becca,' he began again, and knew with alarm that his eyes were staring at the pale skin which peeped through a rent in her skirt. Surely, he thought, I must be damned. My thoughts confirm me. And if damned, I must be wicked. And to be wicked is not to be good. How right the scholiasts were! Perhaps I have been good too long, and therefore wicked not long enough. Yes, he thought, looking on the comeliness of Becca, my heart inclines to sin. I long to taste a new kind of apple. But how does one proceed in these matters? Alas, my mis-spent seven years!

'This is a stealthy place, Becca,' he said, staring around him.

'But for my eggs,' she agreed, 'we are alone.'

'Eggs or no eggs, it is most stealthy. I fear for thee here alone. I fear for thy pearl without price.'

'If I understand you aright, reverend, I have a pearl indeed, but'—and she rubbed her forefinger and thumb together—'it is not without price.'

'Why, Becca,' said Sant-Owen, plucking his chins, 'as well ask a cow for fish-hooks as a holy man for money. But I am troubled nonetheless to think of thy loss should any in such a place as this think to take thy pearl with force.'

'I thank God, reverend, that I was never so obdurate as to be taken with force. That would show great pride in a poor country girl like me. Come now,' said Becca, setting down her eggs, 'what must be, must; and the holier the man the holier the deed. I have always set virtue higher than profit, and I believe my present charity will be no small help to me when, all the world behind and done with, I rap my small white knuckles on St. Peter's gate.'

'St. Peter?' asked Sant-Owen. 'Dost tell me, Becca, that thou believest that papistical nonsense about Peter and his keys? Why,' he shouted, 'let me be damned, if such is my fate—and if the poacher Padog breathes still on earth, then damned I no doubt am—but let my damnation be an unheretical one. Oh Fool, Thief, Slut, Madwoman that thou art, thou hast dulled the edge of my resolution! O Curses! Devils! Brimstone!'

'Slut I am, and Fool I may be, but I am no madwoman. But should you change your mind,' called Becca, for Sant-Owen, was now bundling himself back up the pathway to Monkhole, 'should you change your mind, I say, come to the big apple tree in the wood of Supra Maelor to-night, and maybe there we can swap our scruples. For even the best of men,' she concluded, gathering up her eggs, 'may see clearer by moonlight than in the gaudy eye of the sun.'

Five threads of sound tied the corners of Supra Maelor to the gaunt and clustered apple tree which marked the forest centre. From the north, with Assyrian assurance, came the gaitered legs and velveteen waistcoat of Jenkins the keeper. Under him the sward was almost silent: it knew its master; it sighed subservience, more it dared not. From the west came the gangling shanks of Manmoel Pliny-Evans. He walked with great stealth, setting his foot at every stride on the small dry branches of the glades. 'Sh-sh-sh!' he would caution, as they snapped and crackled. From the east came Sant-Owen, bearing his belly before him and rolling like a castor-fitted octagon along the groaning pathways. All the way he was licking his lips and rubbing his hands, for he was minded to gather both an apple and a pearl. From the south came first the gleaming legs and luminous shoulders of Becca, her feet brisk as titmice among the moss and last year's pine cones; and far behind her the goose-necked shadow of John Lot Padog slid gun-laden along private trails.

The keeper and Becca stepped boldly out from the venetian-blind shadows of the thickets into the white pool of moonlight

that ringed the apple tree. 'Who's there?' said either. Said both: 'It's me.'

To Jenkins, a vain poetic sort of man, it was in no way surprising to find Becca in the wood. How better could she be employed than in looking for her Jenkins? To Becca the case was less simple. There was Sant-Owen for one, and John Lot for another, but 'Just wait till I place a few trip wires to the south of us,' Jenkins was cooing, 'and then what joy, my little tomtit! Ah, Becca,' he continued fondly, 'what a treasure you are, and how cleverly you hoodwink the unspeakable Padog. Were I not already married, I should infallibly make you my wife. Remove that dress, dear Becca, which but hides your beauties from the moon, and be my Eve in this Garden of Eden. My chaffinch! My water-wagtail!'

'Chaffinch I may be, but wagtail I am not,' said Becca merrily. 'But when you talk poetry, how can a simple country girl resist you?'

O Death! breathed Sant-Owen. O Smell of Hell! Shall I see this and live? Trollop! Jezebel! Monster of Women! Was it for this thou broughtest me here? O impolite usage of my favourite tree! I feel the torments of the damned, my mouth is dry, my throat is parched. But if I cannot have a pearl, none shall deny me my apple. Surely while they are so busied——. He edged his way nearer.

From the other side Pliny-Evans saw Eve tasting of the Tree of Knowledge. He groaned like the groaning of great branches, for he knew the whole race of men condemned again to sin and pain and sorrow. John Lot, he muttered, John Lot, surely like your namesake's wife you have looked behind you this night and turned into a pillar of salt! Where are you, my marksman of fire? For here is your bull's-eye. He stepped towards the apple tree.

John Lot Padog, arrived by devious ways, saw a concourse of demons in the moonshine. I always knew that Jenkins was the devil, he thought gloatingly. I will now shoot him in five important places, cut his throat next, and hang his pelt up as a warning to all devil-kind. He saw the pale and lucent gleam of

Mother Eve, and from either side stepped a spirit of evil, one short and round like Baal, the other tall and lean as Mephistopheles. It was no time for half-measures. He rushed forward for a nearer aim, tripped on the keeper's wire, and discharged both barrels of his shotgun.

A great black doubleclap of thunder tore itself from the heart of flame in the demon-haunted woods of Supra Maelor. From its fiery centre it spread and bellowed: its echo rapped from the mountains and rolled under the sky, and with it was mingled a wailing and lamentation. Then as the tumult swooned away, there might be heard the noises of flight from north, south, east, and west. To the north a man in gaiters ran cursing and hecking, his breeches filled with pellets; to the south a white wraith, dress in hand, flitted into the shades. Eastwards crashed a man whose breadth from deltoid to deltoid was as his length from occiput to kneeball, and whose hand clutched a small green apple. Westwards hobbled a tall and gangling solitary whose face in the moonlight was as an upturned china basin.

'——,' said the man who remained.

Slowly he scraped earth from his eyes and blew grass from his nostrils. He gouged leaves from his ears and spat rotten wood from his mouth. He felt wet green moss under his fingers, and heard the bubble of a wood-fountain. For the first time in years he craved for water.

'Damnation be damned!' said John Lot Padog.

He drank.

Poems

In Country Sleep

I

Never and never, my girl riding far and near
In the land of the hearthstone tales, and spelled asleep,
Fear or believe that the wolf in a sheepwhite hood
Loping and bleating roughly and blithely shall leap,
My dear, my dear,
Out of a lair in the flocked leaves in the dew dipped year
To eat your heart in the house in the rosy wood.

Sleep, good, for ever slow and deep, spelled rare and wise,
My girl ranging the night in the rose and shire
Of the hobnail tales: No gooseherd or swine will turn
Into a homestall king or hamlet of fire
And prince of ice
To court the honeyed heart from your side before sunrise
In a spinney of ringed boys and ganders, spike and burn.

Nor the innocent lie in the rooting dingle wooed
And staved, and riven among plumes my rider weep.
From the broomed witch's spume you are shielded by fern
And flower of country sleep and the greenwood keep.
Lie fast and soothed,
Safe be and smooth from the bellows of the rushy brood.
Never, my girl, until tolled to sleep by the stern.

Bell believe or fear that the rustic shade or spell
Shall harrow and snow the blood while you ride wide and near,
For who unmanningly haunts the mountain caverned eaves

Or skulks in the dell moon but moonshine echoing clear
From the starred well?
A hill touches an angel. Out of a saint's cell
The nightbird lauds through nunneries and dames of leaves

Her robin breasted tree, three Marys in the rays.
Sanctum sanctorum the animal eye of the wood
In the rain telling its beads, and the gravest ghost
The owl at its knelling. Fox and holt kneel before blood.
Now the tales praise
The star rise at pasture and nightlong the fables graze
On the lords'-table of the bowing grass. Fear mask

For ever of all not the wolf in his baaing hood
Nor the tusked prince, in the ruttish farm, at the rind
And mire of love, but the Thief as meek as the Jew.
The country is holy: O bide in that country kind,
Know the green good,
Under the prayer wheeling moon in the rosy wood
Be shielded by chant and flower and gay may you

Lie in grace. Sleep spelled at rest in the lowly house
In the squirrel nimble grove, under linen and thatch
And star: held and blessed, though you scour the high four
Winds, from the dousing shade and the roarer at the latch,
Cool in your vows.
Yet out of the beaked, web dark and the pouncing boughs
Be sure the Thief will seek a way sly and sure

And sly as snow and meek as dew blown to the thorn,
This night and each vast night until the stern bell talks
In the tower and tolls the sleep over the stalls
Of the hearthstone tales my own, last love; and the soul walks
The waters shorn.
This night and each night since the falling star you were born,
Ever and ever he finds a way, as the snow falls,

As the rain falls, hail on the snow, as the vale mŕst rides
 Through the haygold stalls, as the dew falls on the wind—
 Milled dust of the apple tree and the pounded islands
 Of the morning leaves, as the star falls, as the winged
 Appleseed glides,
 And falls, and flowers in the yawning wounds at our sides,
 As the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence.

II

Night and the reindeer on the clouds above the haycocks
 And the wings of the great roc ribboned for the fair!
 The leaping saga of prayer! And high, there, on the hare—
 Heeled winds the rooks
 Cawing from their black bethels soaring, the holy books
 Of birds! Among the cocks like fire the red fox

Burning! Night and the vein of birds in the grape green wrist
 Of the wood! pastoral beat of blood through the laced leaves!
 The stream from the priest black wristed spinney and sleeves
 Of thistling frost
 Of the nightingale's din and tale! the upgiven ghost
 Of the dingle torn to singing and the surpliced

Hill of cypresses! The din and tale in the skimmed
 Yard of the buttermilk rain on the pail! The sermon
 Of blood! The bird loud vein! The saga from mermen
 To seraphim
 Leaping! The gospel rooks! All tell, this night, of him
 Who comes as red as the fox and sly as the heeled wind.

Illumination of music! the lulled black backed
 Gull, on the wave with sand in its eyes! and the foal moves
 Through the shaken greensward lake, silent, on moonshod
 hooves,

 In the winds' wakes.
 Music of elements, that a miracle makes!
 Earth, air, water, fire, singing into the white æt,

Naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come.
Ever and ever by all your vows believe and fear
My dear this night he comes and night without end my dear
 Since you were born:
And you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn reach first
 dawn,
Your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun.

DYLAN THOMAS

Seen from the Train

Somewhere between Crewkerne
And Yeovil it was. On the left of the line
Just as the crinkled hills unroll
To the plain. A church on a small green knoll—
A limestone church,
And above the church
Cedar boughs stretched like hands that yearn
To protect or to bless. The whole

Stood up, antique and clear
As a cameo, from the vale. I swear
It was not a dream. Twice, thrice had I found it
Chancing to look as my train wheeled round it.
But this time I passed,
Though I gazed as I passed
All the way down the valley, that knoll was not there,
Nor the church nor the trees it mounded.

What came between to unsight me? . . .
But suppose, only suppose there might be
A secret look in a landscape's eye
Following you as you hasten by,
And you have your chance—
Two or three chances
At most—to hold and interpret it rightly,
Or it is gone for aye.

There was a time when men
Would have called it a vision, said that sin
Had blinded me since to a heavenly fact.
Well, I have neither invoked nor faked

Any church in the air,
And little I care
Whether or no I shall see it again.
But blindly my heart is racked

When I think how, not twice or thrice,
But year after year in another's eyes
I have caught the look that I missed to-day
Of the church, the knoll, the cedars—a ray
Of the faith, too, they stood for,
The hope they were food for,
The love they prayed for, facts beyond price—
And turned my eyes away,
And turned my eyes away.

C. DAY LEWIS

Sea-Wind

Out of the surf you climbed, flung down on the shingle,
The nutty pebbles, sun-spun, firm and fine
Under your smooth, sea-quivering, agonized limbs.
Foam flecked your feet, your hair clung in hyacinth coils
The snakes of Medusa, dripping salt and brightness,
A rough damp towel limp across your loins.

How the sun chiselled you there a sonnet of ivory,
Lapped the salt, left the scent, and your sweet-spare
shimmering form.
The wavelets leaped, and shook all their firetip javelins
Under the hard blue heaven, and under your eyelids
You saw the amber pavilions sliding, dissolving
In convolute colours the very cave of Merlin.

It was the naked wind that snatched your raiment
Away, away—down, down to the dancing waters,
Left you to dazzle the thirsting eyes of Heaven.
Now, after all these long years, a gust of chance wind
Returns me, like fire, the shuddering revelation
So charged with anguish, the seeds fly singing again.

ARNOLD VINCENT BOWEN

England

With the night on her shoulder,
diagonals of landscape emerging
to sunlight, England balances
on water poems and chances.

Survival like a fever burns ashes
over Europe, the Atlantic calling
the foundling and actress to worship;
the sailor leaves a wet kiss on her lip.

Voyages like competitions slowly begin;
the cold journey that in the heart
spins dreams and responsibility,
allows for war no compassion or pity.

Columbus at the centre nailed
across worlds of water, England
like a network of beacons gathers
in the returning wishes of her fathers.

Facing a continent of nightmare
the dark hair of the channel
wraps the coast like a bandage
an immunity to fear and to bondage.

Where always the lost dream hovers
over the past of oceans and achievements,
and the future holds in its awnings
the omen of the gale morning.

England, O if your dream dies
then closed under eyelids of sea
the water of dark tides will advance
and destroy the poem and the last chance.

ALAN ROSS

The Lanely Fisher

By the wan watter o the Fjallavatn¹
In the lang grey dim o a simmer's nicht
There lie to the feet o the lanely fisher
The bluid-bedabblet feathers o the shalder,
The peckit banes o the wee tammie-norie,
And daith's angel, the deil-faured skua
Twangs in the eerie glume aboot his heid
Like the fingert gut o a boss fiddle,
Seeks in its lichtnin dive his thin-baned croun,
Its wud een lowin wi the watter's licht,
Its forkit tail the fleein skirts
O a fang-tuthit troll; and at a likely rise
He lifts his heid in fricht, and jerks his flee:
the quick troot gowps in the toom air,
Straughtens, hits the watter wi a skelp,
And waukens the haill heich craigie quaich
Wi the muckle black-back's bogle craik
And the hairt-wrung wail o the wheelin whimbrel.

ROBERT MACLELLAN

• ¹ A hill loch in the Faroes.

Proserpine at Enna

When the black car came thundering from its pale
 You, fairest flower, were gathering irises,
 Marigold, toadflax, spurge, anemones,
 In shades of prickly pear by the infernal well.
 Gathered, too, his sinewy deft fingers
 Dinting your nesh skin, you faintly fell
 From morning uplands to the Stygian quays
 And shed your virgin petals deep in hell.

Derelict in the iron gorgon's train
 The lipless skull sings of Plutonic rapes.
 With spring your laughing mother re-assumes
 Trinacria; you burgeon green, and green
 Are the gangrenous bodies of our hopes
 Composted in their fertile hecatombs.

RONALD BOTTRALL

Old Cob Wall

Old cob wall
 Have fell at last;
 Us knowed he might
 A good while past.

Great-grandad he
 Built thicky wall
 With maiden earth
 And oaten strawl.

He built en in
 The good old way,
 And there he've stood
 Until to-day.

But wind and rain
And frost and snow
Have all combined
To lay en low.

Us propped en up
With stones and 'ood,
Us done our best,
But t'weren't no good.

He gived a bit
And then a lot,
And at the finish
Down he squat.

And now, since barns
Has got to be,
Us'll build another
'Stead of he.

But not the same
He was afore,
'Cos no one builds
Cob walls no more.

C. FOX SMITH

Madame Zena

Cabbala-wise, mandala-bright
Behind a velvet curtain
She told the future black and red,
The zodiac wheeled round her head,
Her powdered voice was certain.

She read my hand, my mother wrote,
And through the smoke of cigarette
And scent of cachou violet
Her amber beads were good to bite
In lines of light about her throat.

She died upon a darkened bed
With none to hear, with none to write
The tipsy secrets of her night.
Like moths the cards flew from her hair
To set a fortune on her eyes,
The bottle broke, the crystal shone,
The beads were flames to burn the air!
O she was holy in their light,
Cabbala-wise, mandala-bright.

LOUIS ADEANE

Cynic

Who needs no heaven
climbs not so far
that he may stumble
over a star.

Nor will he suffer
who loves not much
that failing fervour
in a lover's touch.

For him no wonder,
no winding stair
leads up to moonlight
and the vision there.

Not a winged impulse
out of its socket
can disturb more than
coins in his pocket.

There is no tentative
moment can start
the child rock-climbing
to reach his heart.

And Death from him
takes not a trick—
he merely collects
his hat and stick.

HOWARD SERGEANT

Earth Pushes Up the Frosted Window

Earth pushes up the frosted window, leans
Bare-elbowed; hyacinths blue growing sky;
Bends over brimming April tub, spring-cleans,
White lilac hanging in the sun to dry:
Bright household, brassy marigolds, velvet
Bumble-bee wallflowers; she fills clear days
Like crystal bowls with cut roses scarlet,
Extravagant her honeysuckle ways:
Lavishes plums, pears, apples, grapes, peaches
Ripe as her rounded cheeks (in winter rough
But now blooming); full-lipped, avid, reaches
For rich prizes of harvest; grasses tough
And tested will stand over you; teaches
Lovers that more will never be enough.

GLORIA KOMAI

Essays

An Alphabet of Literary Prejudice

DANIEL GEORGE

AUTHORITY in its literary manifestations, especially when they are anonymous, finds and shall find me unprepared to co-operate. Attempts to include me in the flock being driven to the high-browsing pastures of the moment will always fail. Have I not passed unscathed through countless epidemics of revivals? Melville, Webster, Donne, Hopkins, Erehwon Butler, Jane Austen, Tolstoy, Trollope, Kafka, Rilke, Péguy, Corvo, Wilkie Collins—I will read them again in my own time, not have them suddenly and mysteriously wished upon me. I might be more amenable to persuasion could I secure attention to my own occasional enthusiasms, but who will take any notice if I attempt to boost, say, Samuel Pordage, Balthasar Gracian, Silvio Pellico, Henri Hertz, W. E. Tirebuck, Richard Beer-Hofmann, Ponson du Terrail, Lucian, Bayle, Klopstock or Mrs. Henry Wood? Similarly, I have no difficulty in withholding approval of those lines in poetry which someone else has adjudged to be good, wise or beautiful.

Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

Who first found greatness in that? And who decided that we must admire any or all of the following?

*C'est Vénus toute entière à sa proie attachée . . .
Mais les bijoux perdus de l'antique Palmyre . . .
Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt . . .
The moan of doves in immemorial elms . . .
La fille de Minos et de Pasiphaë . . .*

Puro e'disposto a salire alle stelle . . .
Bewundert viel und viel gescholten, Helena . . .
Forlorn casements foaming at the—

I forget how the last line goes. Surely none of them have anything over my own favourites:

A damned potato on a whirlwind rides . . .
Elle me résistait; je l'ai assassinée . . .
Ta cuisse a des douceurs d'orange . . .
Zij bloeide in de eerste huwelijksjeugd. . . .
Non moto, con amore e con disio . . .
Madame, il fait grand vent et j'ai tué six loups . . .
I think continually of those who were truly great . . .
And when I wake my dreams are madness, damn me!

As for over-quoted passages from the old masters of prose—Landor's 'Laodameia died; Helen died; Leda, the beloved of Jupiter, went before'; Pater's 'She is older than the rocks'; Gibbon's 'It was at Rome on the 15th of October'—they don't come so readily to my mind as a line which Coleridge dreamt: 'Varrius thus prophesied vinegar at his door by damned frigid tremblings.' For that matter, I doubt whether I shall write anything so good as some words I once uttered on waking: 'Over the cool black begonias the giraffe coughed abruptly.'

Living literary authorities who in their own names muse in sacred woods, reflect in mirrors or take the winds with beauty in channel packets—for such as these I have all the respect of which I am capable, though what they have to say often seems, like speculations upon the curve of entropy, no immediate concern of mine.

BOOKISHNESS, all forms of bookery, all phrases like 'bookman' and 'book-lover,' all that 'With Silent Friends' stuff, all tendencies to treat authors as pets, all sentimental approaches to literature, all waggish pseudo-scholarliness, all implications that the practice of reading is (a) meritorious and educational or (b) a hobby in which a man may be indulged but for which he should whimsically apologise—with all such nonsense I have

never had any truck. It belongs to an age when smoking was 'worshipping at the shrine of St. Nicotine.' Now everybody smokes, and there's so much chain-reading that most bookshops have had to open special 'under the counter' departments. If I were to send the editors of *Windmill* an Among-My-Books, Lamblike essay it would probably take the wind out of their sails; they'd be scared by such a revenant.

This is very much to the good. Everybody reads and thinks nothing of it. I can't see that they'll come to much harm. To suggest that the habit rots the mind will be no more intimidating than the old warning that smoking stunts one's growth. Already some people can't enjoy a smoke unless they open a book. It was, if I remember rightly, our Saviour who pointed out to the Tempter in *Paradise Regained* that wise men agree many books are wearisome, adding that he who reads incessantly is crude and intoxicate. Mr. Dooley was of the same opinion: 'Believe me, Hinnissy, readin' is not thinkin'.' I myself consider there's a good chance that in time reading may lead to thinking. Then, of course, there'll be no more reading.

CLICHÉS abound in other people's writing. 'Jacob Tonson' once bet 'Claudius Clear' that he could write an essay in which no cliché occurred. No, I'm wrong: it's all coming back to me. (That means I'm verifying my reference.) What happened was that 'Claudius Clear' (Robertson Nicoll), defending A. C. Benson against a charge of triteness, issued a challenge. 'We have any number of clever young men,' he wrote, 'with an eye for Tupperisms, though they do not know Tupper in the original. But I defy any of them to write an essay, say, on 'Work and Worry' which shall be readable, intelligent and helpful, without putting in some sentences as bad in themselves as any of Bulwer Lytton's.' (Bulwer Lytton comes in because 'Claudius Clear' had quoted him to prove that Tupperisms are unavoidable in essay-writing.) 'Jacob Tonson' (Arnold Bennett) accepted the challenge, and his essay duly appeared in the *British Weekly* of December 17, 1908. It is not a very good essay. 'I say that I have watched a rude fellow sweeping street-refuse into round heaps

and shovelling the heaps into a high cart; and performing these operations less with his hands than with the invisible divine particle inside him.' Dreadful, isn't it? It's also dolled-up George Herbert:

'Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and th' action fine?'

I seem to be muddling clichés with platitudes, but they're roughly the same thing—ready-made thoughts. Cliché characters are plentiful in fiction. Without cliché principles reviewers would be stumped.

DRAMATIC criticism, old or new, I can always read with pleasure, though the old—Hazlitt's, say, Sarcey's, Léautaud's, Walkley's, Montague's or Shaw's—I now feel uneasy with, as though I oughtn't to be reading it without Mr. Agate's permission. It doesn't matter that I shall never see the things that living critics praise or damn (I think most plays ridiculous anyhow; they have to be or they wouldn't be producible; and incompetent acting causes me anguish): what I like is the way these people write—so wittily, with such assurance and such confidence in their readers' ability to follow them. Names must be mentioned: Ivor Brown, James Agate, Alan Dent, Philip Hope-Wallace, J. C. Trewin—I admire and envy them all, and only very occasionally think that if I were a dramatic critic I could do better. Film critics, too, are so delightful, the women best perhaps—C. A. Lejeune, Dilys Powell, Helen Fletcher—though William Whitebait turns a pretty phrase and seems to know what he's been looking at. *Les jugements sur la poésie ont plus de valeur que la poésie*, said Lautréamont. Current dramatic criticism is better than current drama, besides being cheaper. That goes, and has always gone, for all criticism of all manifestation of art. Something should be done about it.

EARNESTNESS is a virtue I have never striven to acquire, and I distrust it in others. 'When I saw my devil,' said Nietzsche, 'I found him earnest, thorough, deep solemn; he was the spirit

of gravity—through him all things fail.' Allowances should be made for the platform manner. Public people in public places are different from public people in public houses, no doubt. Matthew Arnold could relax and read Fenimore Cooper to his family; Mr. T. S. Eliot, I understand, writes comic verses about cats; and writers who sound like the wisest aunts telling the saddest tales may have their lighter moments. *Moins d'idées! Méfions-nous de l'intellectualisme!* is no slogan of mine. I believe ideas can best be shared—if you want to share them—by a closer correspondence between the public and the private manner. What a propagandist is Priestley! And Voltaire's method wasn't bad. But what, you ask, has this to do with literature?

FRENCH 'flu sometimes afflicts me. Its symptoms, according to Koestler's observations, are violent spasms, watering eyes, contractions of the heart, and adolescent raptures at the sight of certain French words—*bouillabaisse*, *crève-cœur*, *patrie* or *midinette*. (I'm bound to say that none of these makes my pulse beat quicker this very minute, though the sight of '6.50 *Vin Compris*' might.) In its most virulent form French 'flu undermines an Englishman's critical integrity, causing him to exalt French literature at the expense of our own. My opinion is that at certain periods, in some branches, French literature was slightly better than ours; its average competence is far below, but rubbish for rubbish it beats us hollow. *Les aimables Français*, said Stendhal, *qui n'ont que de la vanité et des désires physiques*. Still, culture can't get along without the French. For an English writer there is no cheaper method of acquiring a name for taste and intelligence than by throwing in a Gallicism every now and then.

GERMAN literature I have always been able to keep at arm's length. We did Schiller's *Don Carlos* at school and all I remember of it is *Den Zufall giebt die Vorsehung*—chiefly because we used to read the last word as *horsedung*. Looking into Schiller since, I can never forgive him for wasting so much of Coleridge's time. Goethe I can take in small quantities, at long intervals

though Swinburne thought him the world's worst critic, and somebody reproached him with having given his whole life to literature without lifting his finger to help a human cause. Heine I adore. The latest Mann delights not me, no, nor Ludwig neither. Stefan George, Holderlin, Rilke—I find them increasingly interesting, if rather lowering. But were German literature more of a closed book to me than actually it is I think I should be able to rub along without it. There's something lacking—what Ben Jonson called *sunshine*. How long-winded, how Olympian, how deadly serious and pompous and insufferably tedious, and oh, how mistaken most German authors are! Or aren't they? Speak up, somebody.

HISTORIANS have always excited my admiration. That they rather too publicly excite each other's is an endearing quality in them—at least it can be excused as a mild occupational disease. Thorold Rogers's

ladling from alternate tubs

Stubbs butters Freeman, Freeman butters Stubbs

could, *mutatis mutandis*, be written to-day:

Exhibiting their usual *nous*

xxxxx praises xxxxxx, xxxxxx praises xxxxx.

Lingard, Macaulay, Green, Froude, Freeman, Stubbs, Bury, Toynbee, Fisher, Bryant, Trevelyan, Powicke, Wedgwood, Woodward, Rowse—these names make history for me. To dissent at times from historians' views, to feel an itch to parody their style, and to wonder what practical purpose their zeal and industry serve is only natural in a reader. 'Each generation,' wrote one of them the other day, 'has a right and almost a duty to reinterpret, that is, to *rethink for itself*, the great moments of the past which seem most relevant to its own case.' There is, I dare say, a good deal in that. Speaking for myself, there are too many such moments—far more than in *The Skin of Our Teeth*; and I've given up worrying.

Some readers think the historian should stick to his past and eschew ambition, but personally I've no objection when he sets up as poet or, come to that, as literary critic.

ITALIAN literature begs me to extend my acquaintance with it. My acquaintance began, as often happens with a young Englishman, when I found that even in a French translation of the Decameron certain passages were left in the decent obscurity of the original language. Poggio and Dante I tackled simultaneously; progress with the latter was slow. Leopardi? A little depressing, on the whole, don't you think? (Gladstone wrote of the 'impassioned melancholy' of Leopardi's poetry.) Cynical, too. 'Sincerity,' he said, 'may sometimes prove useful when it is adopted in order to deceive, or when, from its rarity, it is not believed.' And 'In this world nothing is more rare than a person who is habitually endurable.' Others—he is not the first—have uttered lamentations over the condition of humanity: *Non so se il riso o la pietà prevale*.

Croce I find time for when I want to brush up my aesthetics. Silone is the novelist whom I most want to hear from next.

JOKES are what I laugh at. I sometimes crack them for my own amusement. Only the other day when I discovered a molehill on the lawn I said to myself, 'The very thing! I've always wanted to make a mountain.' You should have heard me laugh. English jokes are pretty deadly. In one of my notebooks I have the following passage attributed to Sir Lees Knowles, Bart., C.V.O., O.B.E., T.D., D.L., M.A., LL.M.: 'On August 15th, 1901, I took out to America an Oxford and Cambridge Athletic Team to compete against the Universities of McGill and Toronto, in Montreal, and Harvard and Yale, in New York. We sailed from Liverpool in s.s. *Commonwealth*, of the Dominion Line. Some of their sayings were very amusing. For instance: "If you get bad weather at all, it is after a good day." "Some of us would have been better if we had been worse." "A fine day makes a considerable difference to the larder." One catch was to ask a

friend if he had seen the brass band, and then to show him a port-hole.' Needless to say, the baronet laughed heartily.

English humour in the Chaucerian tradition (most examples are unprintable) I prefer to any other. Our nonsense, too, is better. We are more cheerful. Whoever said *Le fond du caractère anglais c'est le manque de bonheur*—whoever said that, damn his eyes! Probably the old woman in the bus queue was paying her respects to a time-honoured jest when she said to me: 'Money was made round but it won't bloody well go round. Never mind, when I die I'll leave enough to drink my health.'

(There! I had meant to devote "J" to some comments on Jauregui's translation of Tasso's *Aminta*.)

KIERKEGAARD was, I am sure, a good man, but *Einsamkeit* and *Gottgemeinsamkeit* are not, alas, for me. Like Landor's Aspasia, I wish I were 'somewhat more religious; it is so sweet and graceful.' I have tried too in my time to be a yogi; but I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in. KIPLING then—but from Kipling I recoil. Yes, I'll pass some of his verses, but his stories have gone flat. Besides, he never really knew much about soldiers and soldiering. His modern imitators I can't abide. Perhaps I might admit here that I probably have a complex about Kipling. As a very small boy I recited *The Absent-Minded Beggar* at a Primrose League soirée. It has always grieved me that Kipling should have died without knowing that.

LOG-ROLLING is what I wanted to write about, but I'm warned that I may stray into LIBEL. LOVE-POETRY makes a safer subject. How charming it can be! Sad that it's gone out of fashion. Surely the young poets of to-day can be as fatuous and write as melodiously and extravagantly of their folly as any of their less illustrious predecessors. 'The speaking in a perpetual hyperbole is comely in nothing but in love,' Bacon knew. But how comely it then is. The other night I overheard a poet broadcasting; by his tone he was reading a love poem, but the words were the words of science, not of sentiment. *Parallax*

occurred, unless my memory betrays me, *isotope* and *perihelion*. No doubt all he meant was:

Nihtes when I wende and wake,
For-thyn myn wonges waxeth won;
Levedi, al for thine sake
Longinge is y-lent me on.

I was about to say that fashionable fiction puts wrong ideas about love into people's heads; then I remembered Malory: 'But now adayes men can not love seven nyghte but they must have alle their desyres.' Soon hot, soon cold, was love in Malory's time; there was 'noo stabylyte.' But am I mistaken in thinking that *siccitas*, dryness of heart, is a malady more common in this age than in any other? Love is reduced to the *besoin de sortir de soi*. But the old love was not so. Men and wymmen coude love togyders seven yeres, and no lycours lustes were bitwene them, and thenne was love trouthe and feythfulness. Not happiness, you notice. F. H. Bradley, who is sometimes as wise as Stendhal about love, observes: 'The secret of happiness is to admire without desiring. And that is not happiness.'

However, life isn't very much like literature, and I dare say there is still virtue in Liverpool, faithful love in Frinton, and happiness of a kind in Hampstead. I wish I could remember who wrote something like this:

Dear love, continue nice and chaste,
For if you yield you do me wrong.
Let duller men to love's end haste:
I have the wit to woo thee long.

MEREDITH is due for resurrection, and when the time comes I won't mind lending a hand. If I could find my copy of *Modern Love* I would quote, just to show that its spirit is still modern, the line that goes like this: 'I warmed my feet upon her breasts all night.'

Later. I couldn't rest until I had verified my reference and adjusted my memory. The last four lines of Sonnet XXIII are

The small bird stiffens in the low starlight.
 I know not how, but, shuddering as I slept,
 I dream'd a banish'd Angel to me crept:
 My feet were nourish'd on her breasts all night.

There's symbolism for you! In 1862.

NOVELISTS (living, English) whom I admire, with or without reservations, are, in alphabetical order—Lord, I can't think of an A! And after Elizabeth Bowen I have a non-stop run to Rosamond Lehmann with Rose Macaulay next. Kate O'Brien . . . but there must be some men. Alex Comfort? Yes. Henry Green, Graham Greene, Philip Toynbee, Evelyn Waugh. Who else? I give it up. Now if you'd wanted an alphabet of novelists whose future work I am loth to see. . . . On the other hand, there's something I can't help liking about the creatures in second-rate fiction. Fearful thought: the real world may be the one they inhabit—people's minds may be like that.

OBSCURITY in modern poetry causes me no real concern. Why should I worry if I cannot always catch the drift of, say, Dylan Thomas, George Barker, David Gascoyne, or W. S. Graham? Is there not enough left for me to puzzle over in, say, Shakespeare, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Valéry, Stefan George, Claudel? Mallarmé comforts me: *D'ailleurs, écrire, n'est-ce pas mettre du noir sur du blanc?* As helpful is Claudel: *O mon âme! Le poème n'est point fait de ces lettres que je plant comme des clous, mais du blanc qui reste sur le papier.* Nevertheless, I do sometimes wish I were cleverer. Not that as it is I can't see through some poets who are supposed to be obscure.

How encouraging to remember that though human intelligence advances slowly it does move. There was a time when Auden was regarded as 'difficult.'

PROLETARIAN LITERATURE I don't altogether hold with. I'm thinking of the fiction and poetry written by working-men about working-men but never—never!—*for* working-men. It's bad because it's false as well as because it's incompetent. So often

the author makes me echo Carlyle to Werther: 'Young man, stop moaning and get back to your work.'

Why shouldn't I quote from myself: 'As for what is called the Proletarian Novel, it is, almost invariably, an aquarium for poor fish. No self-respecting mechanic would take a job in this class of fiction. The private lives (this goes for whole boards of directors too) seem to have been imported from darkest America.' Too many young men in all classes have been encouraged to take their lives miserably and to write before they are able. Worse, far worse, than the stuff written by the 'proletariat' is the stuff, especially the poetry, written for it by the 'intelligentzia.' During the first war that I helped to win a master at a famous public school contributed to *The Times* some songs for 'Tommies' to sing. One of them went like this:

Here's to Lord Kitchener, brown with the sun,
Gentle, persuasive, and balmy . . .

Some recent attempts at an English *Carmagnole* have been as psychologically silly as that.

QUOTATIONS, if used at all, should be used sparingly. Selden says he quotes authors for matter of fact, citing them as he would produce a witness. 'Sometimes,' he adds, 'for a free expression.' Certainly they are handy in supplying 'free expressions.' But excessive use of them is symptomatic of what John Steeksma in *Working the Mind* terms that 'powerless confusion in the brain, a disorder which we may call "reader's head."' I don't remember much else of *Working the Mind*. My mind wouldn't work. Once I set it at A. R. Orage's *Psychological Exercises*: it couldn't take it. 'Os greely idd eh pegnul tion eth adringe fo seeth skobo tath eh mayn stemi stemp loweh sayd dan tingsh groinp vore meth; nad ni eth den, torhugh teitil spele dan chum dingera, ish narib ceemba diret, nad eh arylfi slot sih swit.' What do you make of that? Other Orage exercises reminded me that in my youth I tackled some in Aleister Crowley's *Equinox*: I was to combine the feel of velvet with the smell of violets, the taste of chocolate and the sound of a

bugle, and then see what happened. It didn't cure my 'reader's head.'

REVIEWERS are not people I hold a brief for. They stand in no need of my defence. Taking them as they come and by and large, they are much better than they need be. I have had occasion to quote from Edward Garnett's *The Paradox Club*: 'Authors are extremely inconsiderate to their reviewers. They forget that a critic has generally to master in two days what it takes an author years to study.' It goes on: 'Such an outcry has been raised about biased critics, that obviously the only course for an editor is to hand the book to a man who knows nothing at all about the subject. And indeed there is no reason why London should not follow the example of the provincial press. . . . Which critic shall we pity most, him who knows more than his author, or him who knows less? While the one is annoyed by the mistakes he finds on every page, the other is irritated by finding none.'

Odd that Garnett (or Loftus, his character) should have credited literary editors with knowing not only what the books were about but which reviewers to send them to.

SYMBOLISM is a subject Mr. G. W. Stonier, to my great disappointment, failed to deal with in his Alphabet published in *Windmill* No. 2. I should have thought it just in his line. There are so many readers waiting to be instructed. A symbol, according to Kenneth Burke (that American critic who seems to have narrowed his mind and to literature given up what was meant for the laboratory), 'a symbol,' says he, 'is the verbal parallel to a pattern of experience.' Bowra, perhaps, is better for beginners. My own study of symbols and other people's orismology leads me to the conclusion that they are things pregnant with meaning but obstetrical interpreters confuse the issue. We are free to believe with Mr. Wallace Fowlie (*Kenyon Review*, August 1944) that Mallarmé's *M'introduire dans son histoire* describes, on a purely literal level, the sexual act; or (*Hypocrite lecteur,—mon semblable,—mon frère!*) we can affect an

indefinable enlargement of our mystical consciousness instead of remaining innocently mystified.

Symbolism in prose is apt to get entangled with allegory, and allegory (though Matthew Arnold, who admitted that he was posing as 'Shite's Oracle,' thought it unnecessary) can be interesting, whatever result you get when you try to reduce the symbols to sense. Kafka's *Castle* and *Trial* are inexhaustible mines; follow a vein until it peters out, there is always another in a different direction. Since Kafka there has been no one to touch Canetti (*Die Blendung*) for intellectual power which, without disdaining humour, attempts an apprehensible psychosociological analysis. Our own Rex Warner and William Sansom are coming along nicely, though not altogether avoiding the danger of exposition by reviewers.

TASTE—obviously—is a thing I don't understand. I never put pen to paper, they say, without committing a *faute de goût*. (How ghastly, for example, that habit of falling into French!) And it isn't as if I didn't make an effort at self-improvement. I have listened to all the B.B.C. book talks—well, one or two in the early days; I used to peer into 'Menander's Mirror,' in the *T.L.S.*, and I often persevere with *Time and Tide's* 'Notes on the Way' and the *Spectator's* 'Janus.' There are weeks when I can read quite large portions of the *New Statesman's* 'Books in General,' and somebody once lent me a copy of a magazine called *Horizon*, though she wanted it back before I had a chance to look at it.

UNREADABLE BOOKS, in my case, are those for which an early enthusiasm has waned, has become, in fact, extinct. Unless in duty bound I doubt whether I could ever bring myself to re-read a novel by Bennett, Galsworthy or Lawrence: I haven't one in the house. As you were! From where I sit I can see *Sons and Lovers*; I thought it had gone to the troops. Too late now. But I can read practically anything once: I have to. What I want to re-read before I die is the whole of Hakluyt, Purchas,

Eden, Saint-Simon, Bayle, Chaucer, Aquinas, Voltaire, Restif de la Bretonne, Walpole, Pepys, William and Henry James, Balzac, Pareto, Flaubert, Dickens, Stendhal, Wraxall, Shakespeare—I can't bear to think of any more. 'The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne.' Why am I wasting time on this foolish alphabet? The Tempter whispers: 'Expand these notes; mention your pets and your *amours*, work in some psychology and a lot more French, weep over the past as you dance on a dime; then make a book of the result.' *Retro Satanas!* Besides, it's been done. And mine might be unreadable.

VERSES of my own composition have a merit that other people are slow to perceive. I can't remember any of them at the moment, though a fragment came into my mind when, before throwing it away, I was looking at an old story of Edmond Jaloux', *Sous les Oliviers de Bohème*. He has one passage he likes so much that with a slight variation he uses it twice: '*Du feu qui mourait, une dernière flamme jaillit; elle palpita faiblement, vacilla sur elle-même comme un homme qui titube, puis disparut tout à coup si vite qu'on eût dit qu'elle venait de prendre son vol par la cheminée.*' This recalled something from my own fireside piece:

. . . . timid flash;
The soft subsidence of the whitened ash;
Then darkness settles down.

I wrote that—oh, ages ago. *Sous les Oliviers de Bohème* also reminded me that I once began a novel with the same theme as Jaloux': a student attempts suicide in disgust at his homosexual desires, but the object of them turns out to be a girl after all. . . . Come, I was only seventeen at the time. Jaloux must have been much older.

WAR NOVELS—those produced ten years hence—may be worth reading. If in the interim we get a good one we shall probably find it was written by a P.O.W. with time

on his hands. To all would-be war-novelists I say, 'Don't rush it.'

Warriors returning in a Pend-toi-brave-Crillon mood will not, I hope, begrudge us credit for keeping the flag of culture flying and the book-trade afloat. We did not flinch; we did not complain. Look at our achievement. Well, look at it—all those amusing agricultural books, all that uplift, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Unquiet Grave* . . .

XUREL (pronounced hōō-rell) is not a word I use in print. It means, says the dictionary, 'the horse-eye jack,' but just what that is it does not explain and I haven't yet found out. Meanwhile I have adopted *xurel* as my own private word for a certain type of critic. There are times when I think Sainte-Beuve, or even Charles Morgan, a horse-eye jack, so you can guess how much xurelity I discover in American criticism.

YOUTH is a splendid time. I think everybody ought to be young once. To be in one's teens, now, must be very heaven—the atom split, the war over, a Labour Government in power, the world's great age beginning anew, thousands of books to escape into . . . thousands more than I had to read before I was twenty. My great-grandfather could be cultured and well-informed on one book and one paper per week—if that. My great-grandson . . . poor little devil! However, as the Cat in *Below the Mill Dam* remarked (who says I don't know my Kipling?): 'the ineradicable offensiveness of youth is partially compensated for by its eternal hopefulness.'

ZENOBLIA is my favourite character in history. We should have got on well together, she and I. Longinus—what, come to think of it, were her relations with him? I don't suppose for a moment that he ever wrung a smile from her.

The Future of Fiction

V. S. PRITCHETT

AFTER their long silence it is natural to wonder what is going on in the minds of the English novelists. Has another Proust, cunningly insulated from total war, been secretly writing all the time? There was said to be a crisis in the condition of the novel: in the eight paralysed years since Munich has that crisis been surmounted in the course of idleness by unconscious cerebration? Was the war our psycho-analyst upon whom we successfully transferred the novel's neurosis? Or do we take up the pen again to be faced by the old difficulty? What we have meant to convey during the last twenty-five years by the words 'the future of the novel,' was our doubt whether the novel had any future at all; a doubt that first arose when *Ulysses* looked like the novel to end all novels, when the first long narrative films succeeded and the monopoly of the novel came to an end; but above all when our most talented novelists retired into the private gardens of their sensibility and left the world outside to their inferiors. Since *Sons and Lovers* and *A Passage to India*, have there been any English novels of the highest rank? A quarter of a century has passed since these two books were written.

It is doubtful whether a novelist is the best investigator of these questions. For him 'the novel' is the novels he has not written; and a guess at the future of the novel will mean for him, the novels he thinks someone else ought to write: *he* intends otherwise. The views of a novelist are hardly more than the steam rising from a simmering pot. Or more precisely, they are arguments with his own conscience and imagination, clues to his own conflicts. Very well he knows that themes, tendencies, methods cannot be imposed. Very doubtfully may they even be self-imposed; any novel he may write rises from the contention within. If he asks for a less esoteric sensibility and for a range altogether wider in the novel, it is because he is dissatisfied with

himself and is not equipped to be very much more. The novelist is what he is.

Still, certain things are obvious.

Talent abounds; the highest talent. If we take any half dozen distinguished novelists under fifty we must admire their feeling, their brains, their writing, their diverse and original skills. They know how to write. They never exceed their knowledge. They make no gross errors. For them the novel is an art and they practise it with fidelity. How rarely one is bored by the best modern novels; how often, in the past, have 'the great' bored us, how awkwardly distended by errors they have been. If only, we say, we could combine all the skill of the modern novelist in one outstanding imagination, if only we could roll any half dozen of our novelists into one. If only—and there lies the undefined mystery of our dissatisfaction. It may be that these distinguished novelists are much more than distinguished; perhaps they, and all contemporary literature, are hopelessly overshadowed by the events of the last ten years. Life may not only have afflicted the creative with its excesses; life may have dulled the ear of criticism also.

If this is not so we can fall back upon the now hackneyed explanations of the lack of 'great novels'; the breakdown of our civilization; the enfeeblement of upper middle class culture; the fact that two wars have robbed two generations of their maturity; the fact that life has behaved exorbitantly. Every writer (I believe Mr. Desmond MacCarthy once said), has to decide the amount of life he will live: it is possible for writers to live too much; and, in one sense, the compressed concentration on skill, intelligence and sensibility suggests the unmanageable pressure of public life upon the writer's mind which, to some extent, must always run counter to the open direction of the world. Our half dozen writers stand on the dwindling ground of private life. There is also a not unimportant mechanical consideration. An uncontrollable amount of visual and oral experience is despatched by screen and radio directly to the audience without ceremony, experience which was once the monopoly of the novelist; and he finds himself in a position similar to the painters' when photo-

graphy was invented. Here the dilemma of the novelist is painful; he is on the flood-tide of a popular movement, a class revolution which offers new subjects and even new language; one which may conceivably heal the split in our culture. But he finds that the cinema and the radio sweep away his advantage the moment he attains it. This is an age of the senses, not of the mind; an age made for the reporter, not for the imagination.

The novelist is also bound to reflect in dismay that the modern novel is only two hundred years old. It is the youngest literary form, far younger, for example, than the drama. The novel was born with modern capitalism, it is saturated with individualism and liberal culture; it is characteristically middle class. Is the novel tied to the fate of capitalism and the liberal view of life? Is the novel condemned quietly to become an anomaly in the socialist climate where freedom, individualism, liberal thought and the preoccupation with individual fate are despised, discouraged or, worse still, are painlessly forgotten? When we think of the future of the novel, we are enquiring whether it is the form which will continue to attract the best creative minds; and it may be that the intellectual atmosphere of the collective state will be kinder to other forms of writing. Under socialism, the sociable art may wane; just as, since the flowering of sociability, epics like *Paradise Lost*, compendious narratives like *The Canterbury Tales* and sagas like *Beowulf*, are no longer written. Official myths may come to mean more to us than private histories, and this condition—as Greek literature shows us—is above all congenial to the drama. It may very well be that ‘official’ art—in this sense—will be superior to the private or unofficial art of the novelist, and already the cinema has shown the capacity—crude though it is—to create myths and ‘heroes of our time’—a capacity which the novel has lost. When we say there are too many novels we mean that so many different views of life become in the end gratuitous and self-destructive; and we would like to return to a form of art which, working under more stimulating restrictions, would speak with the single voice of a classical authority.

Still, though we allow our pessimism to make this kind of

bed, we novelists are not obliged to lie on it. After all the novel is a young form and its strength lies in its adaptability. Private life dwindles: for long, ever since D. H. Lawrence, indeed ever since Wells's *The New Machiavelli*, the interest in character for its own sake has gone. Lives, states of mind, states of soul, collective feeling have replaced the concern with the friction of character in its own circle. Sensibility itself has dissolved character of the traditional kind. The people in Miss Compton Burnett's novels move like the featureless hierophants of some tortuous ceremony. The chief character is no longer the hero, the heroine or the villain but, in a large number of novels, is really an impersonal shadow, a presence that we may call 'the contemporary situation.' Without knowing it, often by responding with his private sensibility only, the novelist has slipped into the role of unofficial historian. He has become the historian of the crisis in civilization, whether he writes politically (as Koestler has done), as a religious man like Graham Greene or with the obliquity of those dispossessed poets, Henry Green and Miss Elizabeth Bowen. This strange new personage has taken possession of the novel as a mist takes possession of the streets and all who breathe it are transformed and, I think, are also diminished. When we regret that there are no 'great characters' in the modern novel, people like Squire Weston, Lovelace, Micawber, Sir Willoughby Patterne or Lord Jim, the reply must be that 'the contemporary situation' has brought them all to a single level.

In making this judgment, we must record the losses of the novel, but we need not go deeply into them. From the point of life, range has been lost; from the point of religion or ethics, spiritual and moral conflict have been lost—we analyse and endure, we do not choose and act—from the point of view of morals or politics, purpose has been lost. We sum up the case against ourselves by saying that the novel has become a diversified autobiography. The 'I,' whether he is the reporter, 'the camera man, the sensibility, the split self of our time, dominates these books. The 'they' of the Victorians—even the 'they' of Wells, Bennett, Conrad and the Lawrence of the mining stories, has receded. Nor need we go far into the gains: the elision of

false scenery, explanatory essays, useless sub-plots, tendentious and literary dialogue, and the great gain in narrative and psychological alacrity. Loss of substance, gain of means, must still (I think) be the general judgment on the condition of the contemporary novel. The war-time novels have followed Hemingway-ese—the false tough or fake poker-faced—to the point of self-parody. They roneo Isherwood also.

The heart of the problem for the modern novelist is that he has had a glut of new means, new manners, new styles; he has been poor in material or passive in his use of it. He looks no subject full in the face and he has accordingly been distracted by the outskirts of it. To his enormous credit the modern English novelist—writers like Isherwood, Elizabeth Bowen and Graham Greene—have conserved the human fragments in an iron age when human lives, what I feel and you feel, are considered to be shameful. Human beings are simply archaic, ivy-covered ruins, preserved by the connoisseur, and they stand out oddly in the new world of the masses. They are seen in a twilight.

And yet, under the new dispensation, is it true? *Are* human beings in fact so isolated, so free of responsibility, so passive before fate? Is their environment merely the dwindling ground they stand on? Obviously not. Before the war the young novelist's stock remedy was Marxism and social realism. We were due for a working-class novel, a political novel, a novel reconstituted by renewed contact with society. It must be said that Marxism has inspired no novels of the first class—at a guess, I would say, Marxism is more likely to inspire drama—nor have there even been any English novels about social justice or economic conditions, or even novels of plain reporting, which arouse much interest. The decadent bourgeois formalist with his passion for psychology has had all the talent. Realism—ideological and literary—has been hardly more than pedestrian. I take it that Marxist theory was too black and white for the English scene. Marxism and social realism have certainly produced no novels of the first order in Russia either; and, to be just, one is not sure whether this is due to the lack of amenity and excess of dynamic in the doctrine or a lack of freedom and

security in which to consider it. The valuable work of Marxism has been in literary criticism where it has traced literature back to one of its sources in social life; and perhaps, if Marxism could be disentangled from the miserable manoeuvres of party politics, and be prevented from the cheerless habit of hanging itself in the loops of the party line it might inspire the novelist. But one must doubt whether straight doctrine of any kind ever moved the imagination, which indeed thrives rather on mixtures. *Paradise Lost* was not written by a straight Cromwellian Puritan. The real political subject of the last fifteen years has not been the clash of beliefs, but the vaccillations and disillusiones accompanying the wish to believe.

Another remedy offered to the novelist was the return to the Christian tradition, the revival of the frame of original sin, the beauties of irrationalism; or a return to 'values,' though the conditions which produced them, the condition of stability above all, are lacking. And it must be said that the brilliant school of Catholic pessimists and converts has brought new material to the novel. The soul—one of the repressed subjects of a rational period—has the attraction of the repressed. Original sin has replaced sex as the exquisitely forbidden fruit; and the pleasure of showing how good are the souls of bad men has been exploited with brilliance. In their badness lies the soil of faith: a bad Catholic is better than a good non-Catholic. The Catholic novelist has the great advantage of writing against the current of his time.

But against them must be put the fact that the Catholics are all converts; they write with Protestant zeal and the Calvinist zest for damnation. Like the Marxists, they are totalitarians and totalitarians do not value individual human life. Not for long. Never when we come to the precise test. Like the Marxists, like the sceptics of our generation, they are specialists. There is no conflict. There is the medicinal application of doctrine to life. The result is that although the religious approach has added new material to the novel, new material that is handled with all the advantage of the long, flexible western tradition of Catholic culture, it is still specialized. The range is still narrow. Life has

gone into hospital: the smell of ether, the smell of the surgery, the un pitying point of the surgeon's knife, are suggested by these brilliant misanthropists, who would persuade us that we all urgently need an operation.

In their general terms, these two movements, the religious and the political, have done a service to the novelist. They have reawakened his interest in ordinary people, they have interested him in the present melting of classes—in which a new class, the upper-working or lower middle-class are coming to power, as interestingly as Balzac's manufacturers—they are restoring the sense of environment. But they touch only the fringe of their two subjects, the side to which their doctrine exclusively directs them. Money and religion: yes, those are the two repressed subjects in the modern novel upon which furtively we open the door, two matters so closely entwined in human life that in observing the lives of ordinary people we can never escape them. Not only that: their aspect changes in every generation, as certainly as the fashion of love. How far we have moved, under the still continued influence of the Romantic movement, from the eighteenth century's preoccupation with self-interest, so despised by the sensibility, and yet ubiquitous. So persistent that who can doubt in a vulgar society such as ours, a society of the common people, that it has the interest of a major passion. There exists at present a kind of mystique of the plain, the ordinary, of all that we mean by the sound, human feeling of 'the people'; it is dangerous and insensitive to fail to observe the other side of this mystique. The movement dominated by the word 'people' has a strong Puritan derivation: the inseparable companion, the unholy whisper at its elbow, is the picaro or rogue.

The failure to write about money, in our generation, has its roots, I believe, in the reaction against the Protestant outlook on life, for Protestantism is not totalitarian. Its vitality has lain in its readiness to break up into new forms; and, in England, its spirit has, paradoxically, done much to create 'the people' movement. Condemned by its intimate association with individualism and capitalism, its hatred of the medieval outlook, its repugnance to anonymity, the Protestant attitude has enormously in its

favour the belief in the necessity of virtue and good conduct. There is no salvation through sin. There is no salvation only in virtue and restraint. The Protestant lives on earth. This religious attitude is now profoundly part of English character; and in ignoring the consequences of it, the novelist ignores important elements in psychology, for religion intones the fundamental human responses. One example may be taken from a Victorian novel, simply to show what the modern novelist has totally neglected: I mean the quite common wish to be good. In psychological terms one would say that the novelist has ostracized the super-ego. The example comes from *Felix Holt* and George Eliot was the novelist of the super-ego above all. Here one sees the mischievous and agreeable Esther Lyon sitting beside the harsh and doctrinaire young Radical at one of his meetings—meetings so topical and disturbing to mid-Victorians, so boring, it must be confessed, to us—and, at the sight of his handsome face, she is perturbed, not by the so improbably direct sexual desires our contemporaries immediately imagine; but by the longing ‘to be better.’ We need not suppose that longing takes this precise form nowadays when a nice girl sits next to a handsome one-track communist, or any other young man with an overmastering idea in his head, but the idea of self-elevation is a permanently recurring episode in love, and is fertile in social consequences. In our own time, so far have we removed from the close observation of environment, we are inclined to take too primitive a view of human conduct and society. The truth is that the primitive and the civilized have settled down to living side by side.

I am not suggesting a crop of pious novels. I am suggesting that what in its broadest sense can be called the Protestant environment, has been neglected by the satirical and the serious. For the novelist, the mad religions are as fruitful as the serious ones. I am suggesting a world with which the novelist can do as he likes. A second suggestion grows out of this: it has already stimulated some of the work of Rex Warner, though he has not infused his subjects with the juice of human life. There might well be a return to the unromantic, unpicturesque rendering of

the great characters who are really great moral types: to the hypocrite, the miser, the envious man, the tyrant, the sycophant, the sadist, the virtuous man, the lazy man. Ben Jonson, Bunyan, Molière and (half-way towards ourselves) Balzac show the way. Above all, the moralized figures of the Russian novel, characters like Prince Myshkin, the superb Iudushka of *The Golovlyov Family*, or the subline Oblomov. The novelist who is imbued with the idea of the virtue and imagination of 'the people,' ought to seek to create myths which the cinema has—so crudely—already succeeded in creating, without benefit of moral reflection; in these moral types, whom all recognize, upon whom all brood, he might find matter which is not repugnant to the intellect and which is delightful to the general imagination. They are the necessary demi-god, the humanized ideas, which a new humanism will have to create if it is to survive aesthetically. Our world is not likely to be satisfied for much longer with the picaresque novel, which has become popular in the present period of chaos. If our world survives at all, the craving for these moral figures, these moralities, will impose itself, I believe, upon the novelist. The experience of war, whatever else it is on the surface, has deposited in millions of men deprived of any other intellectual resource, a simple rudimentary moral interest in the types among whom they have lived. For man is sustained by the sight of his fellows and, in these years, has often been sustained by nothing else.

Welsh Voices in the Short Story

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Cant and humbug and hypocrisy and capel belong to Wales, and no one writing about Wales can dodge them.

THAT gentle creature, Dorothy Edwards, would hardly have agreed with Caradoc Evans, for in the single volume of stories

upon which her reputation rests there is no sign of the things which Evans hated so eloquently. There is, in fact, very little sign of Wales at all. In *Rhapsody*, which appeared at a time when the ferocity of Caradoc Evans was in full spate, the pianoforte is of more significance than the capel. Here the characters belong to that cultured and artistic section of middle-class society which is more notable for its sensibility than for its passions. Dorothy Edwards is the Katherine Mansfield of the Welsh short story, reviewing with faint irony the world of damaged feelings and spiritual loneliness in which she was herself so tragic a figure and which she knew so much better than any other. The delicate impressionisms of her refined etchings in loneliness surrounded by polite culture is a salutary reminder that the Welsh short story—no less than the literature of any other nation—has its refugees from tradition.

Yet so great is the tradition of turbulent passions and violent activities which characterizes the main body of the Welsh short story that there must always be a danger of confining appreciation to the noisiest elements. How is it possible to do otherwise when the trumpet call has been sounded by Caradoc Evans, caught up by Rhys Davies, and later incorporated in the resounding music of those two shameless exploiters of Welsh idiosyncrasies, Glyn and Gwyn Jones? In such a tumult it is not easy to distinguish the quieter voices; even when, as in the case of Geraint Goodwin, they have a pronounced Welsh accent. Goodwin, who died in 1941, two years before the last volume of stories to come from Caradoc Evans while he lived, was a man obsessed with an idea. It was an idea that was not originally his own and which had been predominant in the work of D. H. Lawrence. Goodwin owed a great deal to Lawrence, and as he died a comparatively young man he never succeeded in shaking himself free of the influence of the older writer. Not that this influence was a bad one. In Goodwin's case, at least, it had the most fruitful results; but it did take some of the edge off what he had to say. Reading the stories of Geraint Goodwin one is reminded of the story of the Polish airman who, awakened one night by his brother officers to be told to get up and rejoice

because the war was at an end, replied that there was only one war and that was the war between man and woman, which was never at an end. Whereupon the airman rolled over in bed and went to sleep again. The conflict between the sexes was the idea that obsessed Geraint Goodwin. He was never able to get away from it and in story after story he found new ways, and all of them Welsh—with now and again a dash of Shropshire thrown in for good measure—in which to project his obsession. He wrote with a passionate conviction which was nevertheless relieved of its intensity by the exercise of a robust humour, which is one of the most definite characteristics of the Welsh short story. It is possible that early death may have romanticized the position of Geraint Goodwin in English literature. Yet he speaks with a voice which, despite its echoes of a greater writer, is essentially his own.

If Caradoc Evans wasn't the first Welshman to write a short story of outstanding merit, there is no doubt that he it was who was responsible for putting the Welsh short story squarely on the map. And he made a fine angry splash of colour, did Caradoc Evans. English literary critics took to him straight away. They could afford to; he wasn't writing about Englishmen. Of Evans, his widow, Oliver Sandys, has written, in a remarkable biography of her late husband: 'Looking back, weighing, thinking, analysing, loving in spite of all, I am convinced that Caradoc was not even flaying the Welsh for all the faults and weaknesses he saw in them. What he was flaying so cruelly and ruthlessly was himself—all those faults and weaknesses which he knew were his faults and weaknesses and which he deplored and hated in those moments when his flashes of genius beat back upon himself and stripped him as the bark of a tree is stripped by lightning.'

That is eloquently put, and may well be so. It would, if it is true, explain the absence of those two great virtues, compassion and pity, from everything Caradoc Evans wrote. Unable to forgive himself, he would not be likely to forgive others. Yet it is this very inability to forgive, this failure to feel any stirring of pity for his victims, combined with a passion to denounce

and pass judgment, that gives to the stories of Caradoc Evans the corrosive genius which, as in a distorting mirror, reveals in monstrous shape people who even in the pit of the hell he created for them Caradoc recognized as his own. In Sodom and Gomorrah the innocent must perish with the guilty. Evans established his own private cities of the plain and filled them with Welshmen. The result has not been pleasing to a lot of Welshmen; but it has been very good for the Welsh short story. It has also been good for Wales, even if she is slow to recognize it; although getting quicker, now that the architect has been finally shifted to different quarters.

To a very large extent a writer's vision is conditioned by the experience of his early years. The early years of Caradoc Evans were bleak and bitter and made deep inroads on his sensibility. Some would say that Evans's mind received from its early environment a twist from which it never recovered. Others, that the man's vision was arbitrarily directed towards those aspects of human nature which affected him most powerfully and which acted upon the writer in the same way that the sight of a cancerous growth acts upon a surgeon. And both would have right on their side. Evans was not interested in pointing out the niceties of life, but only in castigating and purging, and if in this process he imbibed a fair share of the sadistic instincts whose appearance in others he flayed so mercilessly, whilst this may have had an unhappy effect on the personal character of the man, its effect on the main body of his creative output was such as to put into hate and denunciation a terrible poetry which places the short stories of Caradoc Evans on a level scarcely below that of the prose writings of the Irishman, Swift, and the Englishman, Milton.

Of living Welsh writers, the nearest in temperament to Evans is Rhys Davies. Even so, the difference between the two is profound. Davies is in revolt against the frigid respectability and false code of values of Welsh Nonconformism. Evans revolted against individuals and institutions alike. Evans was a great hater. Davies is a sardonic commentator. Evans

made his jokes through clenched teeth, like a man laughing in hell:—

'You, Gwen fach, will wear the chickest Paris model we can find. Ben's kindness is more than I expected. Much that I have I owe him.'
'Even your son,' said Gwen.

(*For Better*)

The humour of Rhys Davies is sardonic, derisive, robust, in turn, beautifully regulated for the occasion. With Evans there was only one occasion, the occasion for denunciation. Davies denounces, too, but always obliquely and by implication, reserving his contempt for the institutions and respectable conventions which make men (even Welshmen) what they are. Individuals, as often as not, he exposes to ridicule, but judgment he leaves to others.

Hypocrisy, capel, cruelty, greed, are the targets of both writers. To these, Evans, who was as puritan at heart as the tightest lipped elder in Capel Sion, added human weakness and the lusts of the flesh. Davies, however, flavours his work with a poetic eroticism which he makes use of to score off respectable institutions whenever—which is pretty often—the opportunity for doing so presents itself. Thus, in *Revelation*, Gomer Vaughan, the collier, taking a message to the wife of the chief engineer, is confronted by the vision of a stark naked woman when the door of the house is opened to him, and is consequently able to use this unique and delicious experience to open up exciting horizons in his own married life, though not without having first to overcome considerable opposition. And in an earlier story, *Blodwen*, a respectably affianced young man is anxiously awaiting the return of his betrothed, little suspecting that meanwhile someone else is tasting his treasure:—

But Pugh Gibbons, in his old stony house on the hillside, was laying a flower on the white hillock of her belly, with tender, exquisite touch a wide, flat marguerite flower, its stalk bitten off, his mouth pressing into her rose-white belly, laughing.

Davies is laughing too, and he is laughing again, this shrewd assessor of human psychology, in *Harvest Moon*, at the complaint of the farmer whose masochistic pleasures at chapel have been cut short by the introduction of marital delight into the rector's bed:—

'Very dull rector's sermons are getting, surely? He don't shout and kick at us any more. Yet,' he added testily, staring into his beer, 'bundles of sin and evil we still are, surely, surely?'

Oh yes, the wind of derision reaches gale force quite frequently when Rhys Davies is on the job. But it is a wind that can drop as often as it rises, and whilst in *Price of a Wedding Ring* it blows steadily in the face of Job the Grinder, laughter is at an end when the free and amoral soul whose spirit has been crushed by the weight of a respectable married life with the Grinder is whisked away 'of sobriety and bronchitis on November when the wind whipped icily round the coal tips.'

The compassion that Caradoc Evans was unable to feel for his countrymen has its proper place in the stories of Rhys Davies.

It is the way of Glyn Jones to buttonhole his audience. He does it with vigour. Not content with making a statement, he is for ever grabbing his listeners by the lapels and rolling his eyeballs in their face. There is a story by Rhys Davies called *The Bard* in which the poems of a certain one are described in the following terms: 'Their very size and heroic squandering of words made Eisteddfod adjudicators blench with a kind of respectful awe.' How well we know those poems! In just such a way the undisciplined lyricism of Glyn Jones has a similar effect. Listen:—

One of the huge black nostrils had dried up in the heat and left a narrow, glistening line like a snail-track along his upper lip between his nostril and his mouth, but the other side was exciting to watch because it was still active, and a thin tube of whitish liquid was all the time creeping slyly out of his nose and advancing towards his mouth as he was talking.

(*Wil Thomas*)

Such a lot of words to say that the preacher's nose was running. Does the writer's exuberant prodigality really heighten the impression? Well, it might do, if similar descriptions didn't occur so often in the stories of Glyn Jones. It is amusing and perhaps instructive to learn that Eben Isaac has 'a turn in his left eye which looks like a horse-ball' and that his nose is 'inflamed and veiny, like the rubber bulb of a water pistol or a barber's spray bottle.' But the cumulative effect of this Hogarthian attitude to physical portraiture is somewhat numbing. What is often a powerful momentary impression is later apt to be dissipated by repetition and over-emphasis. A snowball as it gathers momentum increases in size, but it is still the same snowball. It is something of a relief when Glyn Jones abandons his snowball. When, for instance, with exquisite precision, he brings to life in a few artful sentences a whole aspect of Wales:—

It was the blue eye, cold and blue as ice-water, of the Reverend Pari Pryce Price-Parry, son of the sons of Rhodri Fawr, Vicar of Llanifar Fechan, surmounting at daybreak the shawl fringe of his four-poster to find if this was burial weather.

(*Price-Parry*)

As Rhys Davies has said¹: 'A laugh will always be found waiting at the back of the Welsh nose.' Even a Welshman engaged in rolling a snowball takes time off to laugh.

Burial time is as good as any other in the Welsh short story. How astonishing that in capel-ridden Wales writers can contemplate the arrival of the coffin lightly and with gusto. 'Yesterday a kid, to-day a man of fifty, to-morrow they're buying you eight pound ten's worth of elm with brass handles,' says a character in Gwyn Jones's story, *Shacki Thomas*.

That's about the size of it. It's T. S. Eliot's 'birth, copulation and death' all over again. Yet how different is the Welsh attitude. English writers are great on birth and copulation, but when it

¹ *The Story of Wales*, by Rhys Davies.

comes to death from natural causes they are distinctly uneasy, talking of it with reverent, solemn voices, or, as in the detective story, escaping from it altogether by treating it as if it were a clue for a cross-word puzzle. Welsh writers—God bless them!—show no such delicacy. Birth, copulation, and death they embrace with equal fervour. And they can make sport with all three. Where else but in a Welsh story could an old man be taken from his coffin and given a good thrashing, which is what happens to Amos the Rhiw in *A Night at Galon-Uchaf*? Such a thing couldn't, of course, happen in the house of a gentleman, of whatever nation; but then there are not many gentlemen about in the Welsh short story. There is none at all in the stories of Gwyn Jones, unless the squire in *Take Us The Little Foxes* can be accepted as such. It is hardly an accident, however, that in this story the squire and the game-keeper, both of whom speak with the tongue of reason, are put to shame by the passion of the shambling, furtive-eyed Dewi Lloyd for his captive fox. Reason and gentlemanly feeling must always retreat before passion, and in the stories of Gwyn Jones there is enough passion to shake the coconuts off a palm tree. From the bowels of Cymric legend Gwyn Jones has fished up primitive Welsh Man and toggled him out in twentieth century trousers, achieving in the process not so much a contemporary portrait of his people as a poetic synthesis of the spirit of Wales throughout the ages. And since his field of character is not restricted by any considerations of naturalism it follows that Gwyn Jones is free to invest his people with a colour and richness that would scarcely be theirs were they contemporary in spirit as well as in setting. With the ordinary meannesses of an ordinary life this writer is not bothered at all. He is for the passionate people and forgives everything save the inability to live life passionately. Consider the ending of *The Pit*, in which an injured husband has made a peculiarly fiendish attempt to murder the would-be seducer of his wife:—

'No,' said the broken mouth, 'oh no!' But Bendle's fist unclenched, his thick hand stroked the bloody hair. 'Don't be afraid,' he whispered. 'I won't hurt you, 'machgen i.' Very gently he caught Akerman up

in his arms. Then he rose, his burden to his chest, and after one strange glance at his wife set off for the Roman Steps and the house at Castell Coch. She, her face grey and rat-like, her fingers pinching at the buttons of her bodice, followed slowly behind, and it was so they disappeared, all three, into the quiet woods.

Yes, all three; husband and seducer who had lived passionately, and the wife, 'rat-like' and unsinching, creeping furtively and ashamed in the wake of the passionate people.

The voice of the poet is heard often enough in the Welsh short story, but never with such purity as in the early stories of Dylan Thomas. In *The Map of Love*, a collection of poems and stories which appeared in 1939, when its author was no more than twenty-four, Thomas revealed himself as a short story writer with extraordinary powers of drawing the poetry out of the Welsh landscapes he knew and loved. At this time, Thomas wasn't much concerned with the craftsmanship of story telling, and his stories, which were not properly speaking stories at all, but prose poems, were mainly designed to create a mood. Inflamed by the New Testament, Thomas made of the idiot who stood on the Jarvis Hills and spoke the name of Bethlehem to the valley beneath him, and of the legendary Jarvis who lay loving ten different women in ten different fields his own peculiar symbols of that other outcast who was nailed on the cross two thousand years ago. In the same way, the landscape of the Jarvis Hills, whose image occurs again and again in these early stories, served as a symbol for the country of Galilee.

Yet no more than a year after publication of *The Map of Love* the poet's voice in the short story has been drilled and disciplined and speaks no longer with wild beauty of that Jarvis who walked on the flanks of Wales, but of childhood and early manhood, of sights and impressions and twentieth century feeling. Symbolism is replaced by imaginative naturalism and if there is a consequent loss in rarefied atmosphere there is also an assured craftsmanship which was never there before. The poet who once used the short story as a vessel into which he could pour the overflow from his poems has found the dividing line between

prose and poetry. Which doesn't mean to say that there is no poetry in the later stories of Dylan Thomas. On the contrary; but the poetry of the stories published under the heading of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* is in the truthfulness of the observation and the maintenance and conveyance of a sense of wonder in all things. A fine ear for the music of words is expected of a poet. What is not so expected is the capacity to record naturalistic conversation. Yet Thomas can beat the reporter at his own game. Scene: the public bar of 'The Jew's Harp':—

The blonde girl laughed. 'Hark to Mrs. Grundy! I see her with a black man last Wednesday, round by the museum.'

'He was an Indian,' said Mrs. Franklin, 'from the university college, and I'd thank you to remember it. Every one's brothers under the skin, but there's no tarbrush in my family.'

(*One Warm Saturday*)

We have observed with what brave contempt for half measures Glyn Jones attacks physical portraiture. As a contrast, the brushwork of Dylan Thomas approaches close to the art of the Impressionist painters. See how the face of Uncle Jim in *The Peaches* comes glowing to life under the swift, sensuous brush strokes: '... his long, red, drunken fox's face ... with its bristling side-bushes and wet, sensitive nose.'

Ah, Uncle Jim, the treatment you would have received from the exuberant Glyn Jones, or even from the passionate Gwyn, who would have considered you incomplete without a history of passionate violence! Neither is that all from which you have escaped. Caradoc Evans would certainly have found you guilty of the blackest infamies; Rhys Davies poked his sly fingers in your ribs; Geraint Goodwin saddled you with a woman who never stopped talking; whilst, worst fate of all, Dorothy Edwards would have given you a good wash and brush up.

It would be fascinating to pursue the fate of Thomas's Uncle Jim and similar characters throughout the length and breadth of the Welsh short story. There is no doubt that much would be revealed thereby, for the best Welsh writers—like the best

contemporary painters—though they draw for the most part on a common heritage, imbue their work so whole-heartedly with the twists and turns of their own separate individualities that were they to leave their stories unsigned authorship would still be plainly discernible. True of the writers already mentioned, this is no less true of Kate Roberts and Margiad Evans. Of these two, Kate Roberts emerges as incomparably the finer craftsman, notwithstanding the fact that, writing exclusively in Welsh, she is handicapped by having to address what must surely be the larger section of her audience by means of interpreters. Even in translation, however, the sound of life among the labouring people of North Wales murmurs in the throat of Time.

Then the sound of the two men passing the side of the house, and others following them, quarrymen's voices pitched low in the morning, so much lower than in the evening.

(Folded Hands)

In Kate Roberts the Welsh short story has a voice which, grave, sculptural, and speaking with stern poetry, records without embellishment the plain facts of human existence.

Margiad Evans is both more ambitious and less successful. H. E. Bates, in his book on the modern short story,¹ has referred to the 'dark and rather wooden melodramas' of this writer. In recent years, however, Margiad Evans has made less frequent use of the dramatic whisper. The plush curtains of melodrama have been exchanged for the dainty chintzes of poesie. If the faults of Glyn Jones are extravagance and prodigality (which, after all, are not without glory), the faults of Margiad Evans are pernickety and refinement, resulting in a sterile preciousness which, at its worst, is reminiscent of the English Mr. Nichols going down his garden path:—

The cottage had pale grey walls, and its scabby silvery roof was in thick, scaley chunks.

(The Ruin)

¹ *The Modern Short Story*, by H. E. Bates.

This lack of precision, which is, on the whole, most uncharacteristic of Welsh writing, is steadily reinforced by a more forgivable persistence in attributing to nature and the cosmos capacities which were wisely denied them by God. Thus, in *Thomas Griffiths and Parson Cope*, 'the trees were fast asleep,' and later, in the same story, 'the sky looked through one blind eye.'

For a writer who pays such obvious attention to methods of presentation Margiad Evans is a curiously uneven stylist. Her writing, too often of the hit or miss variety, whilst far from being without felicities, is apt to kill illumination with a phrase or a word. Which is a pity, because Margiad Evans at her best, as in the stories, *All Through The Night* and *Solomon*, where she drops playing the artist at the agricultural show and gives herself up to an unselfconscious interpretation of her subject, is capable of holding her own with the best in the land. But the best of Margiad Evans is not specifically Welsh and is largely confined to that small though deep world in which are heard above all others the voices of children.

The poet entering the field of the short story for the first time is sometimes slow to appreciate that he is in a different country. It took Dylan Thomas the best part of a full-sized book to realize that there was something not quite right with his tools. But if Alun Lewis betrayed a certain awkwardness as he stood in the field of the short story, it was not owing to any failure to assess his surroundings but to other causes, of which he was keenly aware, as the preface he wrote to *The Last Inspection* clearly reveals. Of these stories, Lewis wrote that they were 'written out of immediate experience, typed up on leave, impelled by a perpetual sense of urgency.' He regarded them as 'rather personal observations than detached compositions.' Well, as one would expect, these stories of Lewis's are very far from being perfect examples of the craftsman's art. The writing is nervous, strung up, often painful in its struggle to keep emotion within bounds. The voice faltering, uncertain, desperate. Each story, from the deeply moving *Private Jones* to that rather mawkish little piece, *Ballerina*, is informed with a generous pity for the victims of forces which are beyond their control.

To say that Lewis wrote of Service life during war-time as it affected him is an understatement. He opened his eyes and exposed his heart to life in the army, an army composed—as it seemed to Lewis—so largely of men whose wives were being unfaithful to them at home.

‘In the army you begin again.’ (*Lance-Jack*)

Lewis was not only beginning again, he was being reborn, both as man and writer. Of course, it was an uneasy process, and his writing showed it. But even in 1942, when *The Last Inspection* was published, the signs of maturity were already establishing themselves. It was not until 1943, however, with the publication of his first stories from India, that a growing freedom from subjectivity enabled Lewis to go below the surface of feeling to seek out the causes of the states of mind which hitherto he had only been able to express by means of cries from the heart. And so, with *Ward ‘O’ 3 (b)*, an analytical study of four officers in a sick ward waiting to go before a medical board, came the first of the stories of maturity. In this story and in *The Orange Grove*, published in the same year, promise turned into achievement. In India Lewis found what he had been looking for, a country with sufficient depth of soil for him to put out fresh roots. It is our tragedy as well as his that he had to leave almost as soon as these roots had taken. The urgent voice, now silent, had so much more to say.

Five years have passed since the Englishman, Bates, wrote in *The Modern Short Story* that the Welsh short story writers ‘now occupy in the English short story the place occupied ten years or so ago by the Irish.’ In the same year that those words appeared in print died Geraint Goodwin, at the age of 38. Whilst not many years before, Dorothy Edwards had ended her life when still a girl by throwing herself under a train. In 1944 Alun Lewis was lost to the short story. He was 29. Barely had the next year begun when Caradoc Evans went off to argue the point with the Big Man. In the space of a few years the Welsh short story sustained four crippling blows. But Welshmen

are used to crippling blows. Did not one of them from Tony-pandy stand on his feet for fourteen rounds with Joe Louis? To-day, the Welsh voice in the short story is more insistent than ever. To-morrow? Well the sun will still go down over the Jarvis Hills, won't it?

*Poet and People*¹

JOSEPH MACLEOD

*Goodly bull, come, Hero Dionysos,
to Elaeans' shrine, a pure shrine, pounding
ox-hoof graced, Goodly Bull, O Goodly Bull!*

WHEN the Greek peasant of what we call 'classical' times was chanting the above invocation, he was not thinking of any bull called Dionysos, that he could see with his eyes; nor perhaps even of a good-looking young man called Dionysos with vine leaves wreathed through his hair; still less was he addressing a 'personification' of anything. He had in mind, as wide-viewing scholars have now explained to us, a composite idea: bull-ness, god-head, season, clan-ship, enjoyment, trustability, indicated by the word-name 'Dionysos.'

In the same way Presbyterian worshippers address as Jehovah a composite idea of authority, fatherhood, justness, all-seeing-ness, all-power, a sort of semi-visible patriarch and sage, who has very little in common with the Being of the same name worshipped by many orthodox Jews of to-day. Far back ancestors may have had similar attitudes to animals or plants, combining Dionysos with Jehovah as the clan-father, bull-ness, stag-ship, wild-cat-hood, according as they would be MacLeods, MacKenzies, Sutherlands. In each case the worshipper would be bull-man or stag-man, and so became partially divine and more

¹ With special reference to contemporary Scotland.

deeply of his own clan, by drinking the blood of the clan animal or eating its flesh on certain ceremonial occasions but at no other time.

Years pass; and more sophisticated Greek poets address Dionysos or sing his 'story.' They have gone beyond the primitive belief. They know they are not bull-men, but bull-called men, Bull Clan men. The bloody meat has only a chemical effect on them. But they are not so sure about the blood of the grape, maybe, which has a mental effect on them, incalculable, like inspiration. They have a suspicion that at such hours they have 'the god' in them. He has ceased to be a clan god, for the clans are no more than a name. But he is still a community god; and at his festivals great old ceremonies produce works of 'art,' in which religion comes out of the past into the present and is enjoyed by all, intensely; the more intensely by the intensity of the 'art.' The poet is now a public servant, interpreting the god to the people. But the god is still the people. Hence the poet is interpreting the people to themselves. They honour him publicly in consequence, if he does it better than anyone else.

This is the normal estate of all artists in early communities. Each is himself by virtue of the god-head, clan-ness, community feeling, which he can interpret by pen, brush, set-square, chisel, or whatever art-tool best corresponds to the genius of his particular people. Hence you find great dramatists and architects in Greece, but not the former in Rome, nor the latter among the involution-loving Picts. (The genius of a people derives from certain economic, geographical, and historical factors that we cannot here explore.) An artist does not direct this god-head, but he can intensify it. He does this by discovering and revealing new meanings in that god-head. We call this revelation 'poetic.'

It includes beauty, fancy, similarity, and dissimilarity, and a host of other facets of art and of words and ideas. In this stage an artist's own opinions and personal feelings appear very little in his art, though doubtless they effect its creation in some ways. They are practically indistinguishable from other people's, in any case. Unhappy love affairs, or a cynical or gloomy outlook,

are likely to affect his performance, of course, to the same extent as they are likely to affect that of High Priest or Lord Treasurer if these have not achieved a technique of public life. The artist is, in fact, a public functionary.

The matter of his art is so much the matter of public thought and feeling, that he can use a kind of poetic shorthand. At once his public knows what he means when he uses the word Dionysos, or tells the story. Though they are no longer Bullmen, their notions and sentiments go back deep into the past, on predispositions, preconceptions, prejudices, of which it would be hard to rid them. Call these 'traditions.'

The early artist has no need to rid the people of their traditions. On the contrary, he tries to deepen or explain them. He loves them. They are his own, taught to him in proverb by the tongue of his father, forming his fears and desires from the silences of his mother, and fortified all his years with his spare-time companions. The deeper he discovers them, by making clearer their meaning, the more he satisfies both himself and the people.

Such discoveries he makes by accuracy of definition; like science, geometry, or the drawing of intricate patterns. Poetry is the exact definition of the commonplace. Nobody has defined it before in just this way, because a commonplace is never wholly the same for everybody in all circumstances. If the poet would exactly define a night scene according to its meaning for his time, he places Dionysos among the animals; he calls the moon Diana; and all the people know what he means. They acclaim a further contribution to life, a creation or *poiesis*. The shorthand discovers the truth. This is the first stage of realism. Aeschylus used it often.

But, tradition alone, if unconnected with the march of time, carries in its life-blood its own death-germs. Unconnected with the new problems which life throws up as endlessly as a volcano, and taken as if the commonplace were static and unvarying, it becomes a convention. The commonplace turns platitude. And now the living artist, to explain the life of his people, has to interpret their tradition to them, to rediscover it in terms of his own day. Euripides humanizes the gods, as Aeschylus had no

need to do. Euripides now becomes important as a person, distinct from his people. His comments are his, and not his people's till they are accepted. The poet begins to seem what Shelley called him, the unacknowledged legislator of the world. But he narrows away from the whole people to the men and women he himself has known. If this is the second stage of realism, it is already in peril of being its own opposite, at the mercy of whatever distortion the poet's personal preconceptions incline him to.

The artist is now revolutionary, active against a conventionalized tradition. In so far as popular life itself hinders him, he will probably be a political revolutionary too. If he is a full-living man, he must be. For the sake of the real tradition in process of discovery. That is why so many 'revolutionary' artists will protest that they are at heart traditionalists . . . and are called such by the next generation.

But the conventions have a habit of remaining. They can triumph even from their graves. They can conquer the living traditions of other lands and times. The Dionysiac Bull bulges, vine-wreaths and all, from the wall of the Chapter House in anti-pagan Southwell. Diana becomes the pet-name of a red-haired English Queen. Jove, a comic curse in an army of occupation in India. These are no longer traditions, but conventions, limited to a small class of initiates, not intelligible to the whole people. They add tone to something not traditional for the whole people. The classic reference gives 'class.'

Conventional artists serve these minorities, but though they beautify and add to the classic references, though they codify accurate definitions, and mix in a wheen of common life for novelty and variation (this is the realist in a poet seeking excuses for his master; for all artists are realists in proportion to what made them artists), nevertheless they discover nothing. They create parallel to truth, and not from it. Girls are nymphs. The air is ambient. The back-gardens of Twickenham contain feathered choirs. Not to know the rules excludes you from membership. Not to know life is no transgression. Art has texture and rhythm and technique and perfection and all the

enchancing things that fine poets can make; but it no longer satisfies them.

For the poet has his roots in a real tradition, a deep and living one, taught to him in proverb by the tongue of his father, forming his fears and desires from the silences of his mother, and fortified all his years with his spare-time companions. What has played with him as a boy is too strong in his imagination to be bound in classy conventions. For every correct metaphor or rhyme there are a dozen fiery truths to be recognized by accurate definition; kindled at home, fanned by his daily work, consuming the very words he uses, he cannot smother them.

Yet how can he write for the people? The clans are gone and the people is split in classes. The classic shorthand, the glory of the commonplace, the radiancy of accuracy, mean nothing. The people, frustrated, impoverished, kept ignorant and self-deprecating by a strong class rule, cannot see pictures and do not read poetry. Yet they have the tradition, as he has. Their subconscious minds are conditioned as his is, by folk-lore, legend, the id and od of countless generations of subconscious minds. At this point in history, therefore, the poet finds his, and his people's truth, in these untruths. Realism focuses on the child-like, and the world becomes very wonderful. Now the poet's most treasured possession is his own heat and fancy. His comment may be limited to himself, but it is his own.

Pushkin, Byron, Keats, Shelley, are eager. They die young. We dare not prophesy (especially of Keats, who might have become a dramatist of the first rank) their revolutionary destiny by Wordsworth's. In time, calendars and cheap reprints and the slow vulgarization of genius that follow, and, because of the shape taken by the industrial age, have to follow, along behind the Reform Bills, now turn that bright poetic childhood into the *sensiblerie* of middle age. Fairies and roses and dewdrops are the only province of the people's poetry in an age of Chartism, aggression, Poor Law guardians, and the ownership of women.

To avoid the platitudinous, the poets do not turn to the 'unenlightened' people; they assert originality in themselves. Chaos ensues. Reactions anticipate actions; romantic, realist,

classicist, aestheticist, formalist, nationalist, internationalist, and a dozen rival schools flourish at the same time. Individual artists contradict themselves, lacking the stability of public function. A leading rational poet, in whose works the damp souls of housemaids sprout from basements, turns mystic and contemplates leopards on ladies' staircases. A painter whose early drawings have shown a compassion for oppressed peasants scarcely rivalled in art, abandons humanity for brush-work and colour, and dies in a madhouse. An Irish dramatist, with enough sense to feel the need of popular myth at the beginning of a new national independence, tries to recreate the demi-gods of the Gael as if Dionysos has indeed come to the slums of Dublin.

In an attempt to reconcile these conflicts by exploring their common source, the new psychology is utilized. Reasonable standards, observable reality, are rejected. The subconscious is crowned. A new discovery of tradition this, surely, handed down to us by the silences of both father and mother? The base of our actions and soil of our thoughts, yours, mine, the poet's, the people's? Shapes seen in dreams, as anybody might and does see them. Observation of a kind of reality? Comment of a new sort on a new truth? In time, will not the people recognize and hail the poets of to-day, by then become the poets of yesterday, for their solution of the contemporary problem? Or is this all an escape of a leisured or careless class from problems too uncomfortable to solve?

The artist appears, certainly, to be back in the time of the early artists, with the barriers down between him and the people. But in reality they are not down; they are up. For in early times the artist was making the comment of all the people in his own comment, even where, as in Aeschylus, he was in many ways a rebel. But other people to-day are not back in the time of the early artists. Their comments cannot be his. Their common-places are not his. Outward, everyday problems in their lives demand conscious, not subconscious, solutions. Whatever his comment is, it cannot be contemporary. Indeed he has, in renouncing the conscious, renounced his own comment. His depersonalized art has had its tongue torn out. He cannot, like

Shelley, account for Castlereagh or the Revolt of Islam. He must not differentiate man from man. The paradox of art has him in thrall: by freeing himself, he loses the self he freed. The new shapes he discovers are the mere paintings of averages. In assembling untried combinations of words, he is playing bricks with clichés. Already in his flight from false tradition, he has set up a new, unmalleable, convention.

The trouble with 'psychological' art is that it does not go deep enough into psychology, but remains bookish. Any professional psychiatrist would scorn, or condemn, a practitioner who kept his treatment on the subconscious plane alone. No cure goes on, no truth is found, behind an undisturbed Seventh Veil. Only by squaring up the secret withdrawal with the responsibilities of life can any psychic, or any actual, problem be solved.

Now, there is the same mixtie-maxtie of conscious and subconscious in the soul of a people, which is only the sum of the souls of people. Overcrowding, underfeeding, industrial fear, agricultural neglect, and all the other causes of neurosis which prevent us from overcoming the usual disorders incident to weaning, slapping, threats of disapproval, and all the other processes of being trained to be human . . . none of these can be nullified by looking at a surrealist picture or studying an apocalyptic poem. Indeed such causes will operate against the full enjoyment of pictures and poetry, unless these works of art take also into account the causes themselves. Nor will mass art-education do this trick, unless reform at the same time removes them. In other words, this art is for an unknown future society. Our artist has not solved his contemporary problem. He is just as far from his public office, just as blind to tradition, as the most academic and be-lettered conventionalist. He is worse. He has created a convention not of the past, but of the future.

How can any contemporary artist, faced with psychological knowledge on the one side and social conditions on the other, fail to create such a still-born convention? Only by taking account of both sides. There is only one clue I know of that he can lay hold on. That lies in individual human beings, for they

are made such by both sides. And they are the only possible material for him, that is so made.

The individual human being can develop himself to some degree; other people can develop him to a greater degree; but the greatest part of his individuality comes from his 'character.' Now character is a partly reasoned summation of reason and non-reason, the first shape of which shows in childhood from whatever made the child's parents' characters, and their parents' before them, and theirs before them, away back maybe to the Bull men. Views, experiences, dogmas, and doubts, have altered them down the centuries; but there is a basic stock of character which is kept alive in the generations by the habits of the community. A person, as the intelligent John Grierson has remarked, may be a person in public as well as a person in private. This is where nationality cuts across international fashion, and the people across the individual. Scots, for example, to-day make no better cricketers than their ancestors made archers; but in football they follow hand-to-hand fighting. Conversely, a Scot tends to be either a strong whisky drinker or a dogmatic teetotaler; but in either case he is logical about it. Even the Highlander has a subtle logic that the Lowlander mistakes for opportunism. So nationality is one of the strongest components in making an individual. Even the rebels who reject their nationality, are formed by it.

Now the artist facing this question of the uniqueness of any human being is far happier in a nationally-awake country than in any other: Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Walt Whitman, Burns (not that any of them are sure at once of a tremendous welcome. Aeschylus, for all his public function, was twice in danger of extreme penalties for the very uncompromising truth of his art; and no artist in any land should complacently assume security because he is trying to work for the people!). Burns indeed is a fine example. Working away from the false classicism of his day, he rediscovered his tradition not in the romantic imagination, but in his own language; and was thereby able to unite reality of observation with a deadly accuracy of word. He rediscovered the commonplace in, for instance, *Ae Fond Kiss*,

as Shakespeare did in *Prithee undo this button!* but no one can call either platitudinous. Some of the place-names in Burns' songs ring with the homely clan-call of Dionysos and Diana; a geographical, for a historical, shorthand: because he loved Scotland as he loved his fellow-men and women, and as those men and women loved her.

The Scots were, and are, an easier people for a Scottish poet than the English are for an English poet. There is more genuine national feeling here. A national feeling which, like the best nationalisms, is part sentiment and part necessity for work. The encroachments of large international concerns, mostly English; the centralization of government at a great distance without any compensating knowledge of local conditions and little consultation of the governed by permanent civil servants[†]; the recent deliberate frustration of Scottish enterprise and encouragement of the transfer of factories to England, which is not yet wholly reversed by the People's government; the ignoring of certain grievances, prejudices and habits; these and many other things make it daily more and more difficult to carry on work in Scotland, whether that work is skilled labour, a private business, co-operative enterprise, or a branch of a Government office. Many thousands of small business people, and many hundreds of thousands of workers, regard Home Rule at least as a possible if partial solution. The workers, millions of whom speak a different language from anything across the border, and whose food, customs, and interests are foreign by English standards, have very little affection for the English, and a very great regard for Scottish traditions whether live, dead, or moribund.

Nor is poetry so avoided by the masses as it is in England. Burns is quoted on the job with a real understanding in circles dubbed uncultured (as in other respects they may be) by the middle class. In Highland, Island, and certain Glasgow Gaelic homes a good poem is as welcome as a good song or an eight-some. The poet who can touch a fellow-Scot as an individual,

[†] Herring curing can be stopped arbitrarily in the height of the season, for example, on the ukase of a paper prefect, who may be anything from a Uriah Heep to a retired major-general.

both in his conscious and subconscious minds, is pretty sure of a welcome. Not perhaps on the Walter Scott scale; those days are gone, and have not yet returned. But ultimately. And there are poets active in Scotland to-day who embrace in their mental view both psychology and politics, without being either surrealists or poetic statisticians. They have the guts to attempt the commonplace without falling into a platitude. It is perhaps significant that the same process is to be seen in the poetry of Soviet Russia.

Most of our poets are politically on the left. Chief of them is Hugh MacDiarmid, a figure of considerable intellectual stature, with a great range of poetic form. In some exquisite Scots lyrics, like *The Watergaw* there is such an intense, economic, and accurate use of words as to be almost magical. In most of them humanity is studied realistically and with deep feeling. In many even the cosmos becomes personal. In his longer, free-verse, Pound-like English poems, learning, philosophy, history, philology, public affairs, and many languages and literatures pour forth like a cataract. I find in this side of MacDiarmid the broad knowledge that has fitted so many Scots to manage Empires and lead professions and sciences; always with this same sense of humanity and respect for its dignity and compassion on its shortcomings. But he is no individualist, for all his rugged domination; he is an active rebel, Socialist (his hymns to Lenin are outstanding), politically Nationalist, and patriot, whose deep love of his people makes self-advancement in material matters a thing of no interest to him, just as his uncompromising habits make it impossible anyway.

Second to him in importance I would place Douglas Young, another picturesque figure, and again, like MacDiarmid eager in public affairs, patriotic, rebellious, learned, linguistic, with power and grace in his Scots poems. Like MacDiarmid, too, he does not limit his 'dialect' poems to spoken Scots, but includes many words from the past, as Burns did, and with the same rich accuracy. Neither is obscure, though the encyclopaedic knowledge of both demands study. Young, I would say, though (he would say, because) a prominent and active Nationalist, has an

international outlook which is much more frequent in Scotland than it is in England.

Beside these giants is a whole poetic generation of no mean talent. They group in many schools. Even those whose forms derive from Paris or London or India set Cairngorms in their gold-work, surrealist, apocalyptic, mythic, or whatever. There are William Montgomerie and the late William Jeffery, both in different ways rediscovering tradition in their experiments. There are the sensitive talents of Robert MacLellan and George Campbell Hay writing in Scots. There is Maurice Lindsay, leader of the young, whose *Jock, the Laird's Brother* is an epitome, in rhythms, images, and meaning, of all that the new Scottish poetry stands for; it may one day be ranked among the very best of its time.

All these are poets of the Lowlands or cities. Even their love lyrics are born of the industrial belt, with its alternations of chimneys and trees. But the Highlands, too, have their share in this revival, apart from poems of the above writers inspired by visits to the countryside.

Writing in English, George Bruce and Adam Drinan from the East Coast and the West respectively, rediscover the traditions of their peoples in a new style that is simple, accurate, vivid, and deep. George Bruce's output at the moment is small, but he is always alive and compelling. The fisher life of the Moray Firth, where he was born, has not been overlaid by subsequent 'education.' His terse bright lines rely on truth more than delicate rhythm for their effect. Drinan is more graceful. He explored such relics of Celtic forms and rhythms as have survived the onslaught of the Presbyterian Church. But he is also a Marxist, and his awareness of to-day never allows him any indulgence in Celtic Twilights. He has a faculty for translating into poetry the light, colour, people, and living conditions of the Islands and the West Coast; and it is significant that his poems, as I am told, have been read to and approved by Kintyre fishermen. Also significant is the rumour that his forthcoming volume of poems is about the London blitz.

Lastly, and perhaps more than all the others entitled to the

word genius, there is Sorley MacLean from the Isle of Skye. Writing exclusively in Gaelic, and scorning with a savagery that is found in many ancient Gaelic poets any ignorant affections of outward nationalism, or anything else, but deeply, deeply patriotic, he also is a Marxist. He maintains in long poems and short lyrics alike that continuum of forcible simplicity and keen observation (as keen in his case for the rags and cruelty of a Glasgow tenement as for the moon or the fauna of the Isles), which is quite unknown to English literary critics but has in fact lasted almost unbroken from the days of Alastair MacMhaistir Alastair, or Duncan Ban MacIntyre, or Mary MacLeod, or beyond. This tradition is no more out of touch with the events of to-day than it has ever been out of touch with the events of any day. It is greatly and communally realistic.

Even the remote Hebrides are thus brought into the new tradition of Scottish art. It would be an overstatement to say that all Hebrideans are aware of what is coming to them. But they have their own traditions, still very far from being conventions. Their culture has overflowed the sea, and subsists in patches of industrial Scotland. It is primarily a non-written literature. Annie Johnston and Donald Campbell are teachers in Barra and Eriskay; Margaret MacInnes is a teacher in Glasgow; James MacPhee (from Ballachulish) and James M. C. Campbell are London business men. But they can all sing (in exquisite island peasant style, which is natural to them, and learned in their own original homes), songs in Gaelic which may either have come down orally from the Dark Ages or may have been written by a janitor in Glasgow, or by a native of Mull. And the themes of such songs are realistic. Even if they, or something like them, were first begun by the Bull men, their primitiveness is a kind of historical realism, and not that of Stravinsky. If they are modern, they go back to no nostalgic simple life, although there is, of course, a tendency to remember the Minch and the machair as an escape from the black stones of Glasgow. They are rather the outcome of something that has affected the whole Gaelic community, the sinking of a ship, the death of a Gael. Sometimes they have new words fitted to an old tune which has survived

naked, so to speak, having lost its words; sometimes both words and tune are the new invention of the singer.

This Gaelic culture is often said to be dying, as Gaelic is said to be dying out. Nothing could be further from the truth. The numbers of Gaelic speakers have certainly dwindled since the clearances of the last century. English educational methods have done their best (by official decree) to kill Gaelic: at first forbidding it in schools, then allowing it as a set subject, like Latin, or any other dead language. But Gaelic is too precious to the Gael for English officials to kill it. As long as it is spoken by the father, as long as it is implicit in the silence of the mother, the child will speak it on his way home from school. In the Highlands many hundreds of middle-aged folk begin to learn it each year. Mods and Gatherings by clans or districts in towns and cities encourage it. Most surprising of all, a group of young Glasgow workers, anxious to explore Scotland in their free time, have found the necessity of learning not only Gaelic but also Highland pastimes and history; and have formed an association for the purpose. This is not fostered by anyone, but is quite organic to their situation as Glasgow workers with an interest in their own land. Their numbers are growing every month, and their studies are lively and wide. I have no doubt that before many years have elapsed, this Gaelic culture will have taken its written form more widely than at present; magazines and books will have a greater circulation; and so it will be recognized by the English critics as constituting a real national culture, as it would have been recognized long ago if those who administer the 'United' Kingdom had solved the national problems of our federation as the Stalin method solves those of the Soviet. For here tradition has not yet split away from life, and there is no need yet for the Gaels to rediscover it.

With the other parts of Scotland it is otherwise. If I had to describe any common quality of the varied poets serving her to-day, I would say they were establishing a new sort of Classicism. It has the classic quality of accurate definition, possible from the wide vocabulary of Lowland Scots (Scots has over fifty words for describing different gaits), or from the

subtle allusions and technique of Gaelic verse. It is contemporary, in that it is not bound by rules for the delectation of the initiated. It embraces both modern psychology and modern politics. It is positive and realistic in its approach to humanity, upon which it centres. When Drinan writes of the Clearances, he is aware of Fascist Germany; and when MacDiarmid or Young or MacLean sing of mountains, they do not forget the slums. Nor are any of them limited to mountains and slums. They are in action, practically, in their own lives, for a better Scotland and a feed Scottish people, freed from any oppression, capitalistic, English or Scottish. They are the Scottish people; and the Scottish people are people of the world.

The Fate of Modern Painting

HERBERT READ

'I WRITE poems for poets and satires or grotesques for wits. . . . For people in general I write prose and am content that they should be unaware that I do anything else.' This opinion, expressed by Robert Graves in a foreword to *Poems 1938-1945*, is one which most poets will be found to share; and even if they have not dared to express themselves so frankly, their activities suit Mr. Graves's words. Their work has no appeal to people in general, and never could have had such appeal.

Painters, for reasons which can perhaps be explained historically, but which are not logical, still maintain a different belief, and a vast organization of exhibitionism, salesmanship and propaganda has been built up to support their belief. But I see no *civic* difference between the poet and the painter: each is an individual giving expression to a personal vision which may or may not be of great social importance, but in one case society can ignore the creative gift with impunity, in the other case it

is now to be bullied into accepting it and paying for it out of public revenue.

If we go back four hundred years, there is no difference in the treatment meted out to any type of artist. The painter, the poet, the musician or the architect, may have had a patron—another individual blessed with wealth and power—or he may not have had a patron; but all were treated alike, according to the patron's estimate of their merits.

The economic structure of society has changed, and during the past three centuries, and latterly at a devastating speed, the basis of patronage, which in its final form was the private fortune, has been undermined. As a consequence of two world wars, and of the gradual conversion of most societies to some form of socialism, incomes have been equalized and wealth, of an order which permits largess, has been whittled away.

The poet has long since accommodated himself to this new situation. He usually takes a job in a bank or a publisher's office, and writes his poetry in the bus, or at week-ends. Or he may give up poetry for some more popular form of literary entertainment—that is to say, he commercializes his talent, becomes a copywriter for the advertising agent, or a script writer for Hollywood. But then he is no longer a poet in any serious meaning of the word.

The painter has never accepted the new situation. He has made various attempts to adapt his craft. Hogarth, for example, hit upon the idea of making prints of his paintings and selling them at a popular price to a large public. But photography and other techniques of reproduction took the profits out of that practice, and to-day the engraver or etcher is just as clamorous as the painter for some form of patronage.

Now that the private patron is threatened with final liquidation, painters demand that the State should become their patron. It is not only the painters who make this demand, but a whole host of interested critics, art historians, sociologists, politicians and priests. Their claims are formulated without any qualms of modesty in the report on *The Visual Arts* sponsored by the

Dartington Hall Trustees.¹ 'It is essential,' we are told, 'for the well-being of painting and sculpture in this country that Government patronage of living art in all its forms should be continued and extended. It is necessary that private patronage should be encouraged, and that in local galleries and by travelling exhibitions the public should be able to enjoy and buy contemporary art. The Government should also support painters and sculptors by buying their work for the national collections and by commissioning them for specific purposes. The Government should either commission artists to decorate public buildings, or introduce legislation on the lines of that in Sweden and some other countries, where a percentage of the total building cost of all public buildings is required to be spent on their decoration by artists. Assistance should be especially directed to tide promising young painters and sculptors over the difficult years between leaving college and establishing themselves. It is useless to consider a larger place for art in the life of the nation without first securing the livelihood of the artist.'

There are many other such arguments in the Report of this Arts Inquiry. It is true that there is an underlying intention to keep private patronage alive, but the economic facts presented in this same Report merely serve to make clear the futility of such an intention. Works of art can only be bought with painful sacrifice on the part of individuals, and even these few willing buyers are not sufficient in number to support the thousands of people who choose to become painters and sculptors. The writers of the Report realize this clearly enough, and they have no hesitation in suggesting that the State should become the universal patron.

There are several aspects of the question which are not considered in this Report, nor in general by advocates of State patronage. In this paper I would like to examine three of them:

- I. The actual process of State patronage—who in effect is the patron and by what machinery is choice exercised?
- II. The material consequences of State patronage—what

¹ Published by the Oxford University Press, 1946. 10s. 6d.

becomes of the works of art purchased by the State and what is their actual effect on the public?

III. The effect of State patronage on the artist, and eventually on the quality of the art produced?

A critical examination of State patronage under these heads might lead us towards some general principles which imply quite a different solution of the problem.

In the first place, let us ask who actually is the patron in State patronage. The State is often rightly described as a machine: its total effect is inhuman. But the cogs in the machine are nevertheless human beings—perhaps not *ordinary* human beings, for in the first place they were selected as possessing special qualifications, and a few years' service as a cog may have had some effect on their characters: a well-worn cog has polished teeth. But ministries of education, museums and art galleries, advisory councils and selection committees, are composed of administrative officers, executive officers and clerks. Patronage, that is to say, the selection of artists to work for the State and of works of art to be bought by the State, would presumably be exercised by officers of the administrative grade, with perhaps the assistance of advisory committees. The administrators—even if museum or gallery officials—will not necessarily be men of sensibility or taste: they have been appointed for their presumed efficiency in administration. But even supposing that they are men of taste, and are advised by men of taste, whose taste shall they represent when it comes, say, to the purchase of a painting or the giving of a commission? Let us remember that we are not concerned with the art of the past, where a certain consensus of opinion can guide the administrator. A decision has to be made which is, or should be, the direct exercise of a native sensibility.

But will it be? Will it not rather depend on the prejudices and casual knowledge of the individual in question—whom he has met, what he has read, what he thinks will please the Press? If it is a committee which is to exercise the choice, the situation can only be worse. I have served on many such committees, and in my experience only one of three things can happen:

1. something is chosen which offends nobody, because its virtues are negative;
2. a little bit of everything is chosen to please everybody;
3. the committee agrees to be realistic and to allow one member to make the choice for all of them: the committee, that is to say, resigns its functions in despair.

The first two possibilities, for instance, merely lead to compromises: they do not imply intelligent patronage and can hardly be said to encourage the best in art. The third possibility is equivalent to the administrator's own choice, and the State is really paying for the indulgence of one man's taste, to which it then proceeds to give the sanction of its anonymous authority.

But administrators change, committees change. A patron of old was at least consistent, even dictatorial. The State as a patron is fickle, and in a very short time a collection of modern works of art accumulated by a government or a municipality is distinguished by its incoherence and dimness.¹

Proposals have been made for improving the administration of art services—for consolidating the national and provincial museums, for recruiting staff on a more intelligent plan, for establishing art centres which will act as agents of education and propaganda, bringing the public into contact with the State's purchases, inducing them to appreciate the administrator's taste. Such measures would introduce order where there is at present almost complete chaos, but they would only intensify the indecisiveness of the patronage to be exercised by such an efficient machine.

Now let us consider the physical aspect of the problem. The products of State patronage can be disposed of in two ways. If they are *objets d'art*, easel paintings and pieces of sculpture, they can be accumulated and housed in galleries and museums. No limit is set to such official collecting. The national collections in London already comprise hundreds of thousands of objects, but

¹ '*Les fruits les plus accomplis du pompiérisme académique*'—the Paris newspaper *Combat* on an exhibition of modern British paintings from the Tate Gallery (June 19, 1946).

most of these are antiques. We are, presumably, to collect and house hundreds of thousands of novelties. What we don't house in the capital we shall distribute to provincial cities and towns, even to village colleges and women's institutes. A hundred years ago a humble workman could buy a Staffordshire pottery figure and put it on his mantelpiece. He can no longer buy Staffordshire figures, or anything like them; but the State will buy a picture for him and hang it in the local art centre.

The second way in which the State can patronize art is to use it in its own buildings. It can have painters to paint murals in the post offices; it can put mosaics in railway stations and stained glass in town halls. I see no objection to such a policy, except the one already mentioned: the choice has to be made by an official or a committee. Such results as we see around us already merely reflect the indecisiveness which is bound to be the result of official selection. They are eclectic, inconsistent, incoherent: they cannot be otherwise because there is no common tradition, no prevailing sense of style. Without a tradition to guide them and the infallibility of a sense of style, the guardians of public taste can only express their own separateness, their individual tastes and whimsies. If they wish to be popular, their choice will be vulgar; if they have any inclination of their own to follow, it will inevitably be esoteric, 'highbrow.'

Now let us assume that the State has had a run for its money—a run of a century, shall we say, which is not a long period in the history of art. What, at the end of such a period, will be the position? Museums and art galleries will have proliferated—every city will have several, and no town but will have its art centre. We may restrict the size of the units, but that will only increase their number. Facilities of travel will meanwhile have developed enormously, and there will be no reason why every citizen should not see every museum in his own country, and as many as he likes abroad.

But will he want to? I have seen hundreds of museums, from Aberdeen to Ravenna, from Stockholm to Chicago. I began my pilgrimage, some thirty years ago, eager, inquisitive, thrilled. But now I am *sated*. I am not a *Kunstforscher*, an art detective,

keen to expose some false attribution, hopeful to find some unrecognized work of a fifth-rate follower of a minor master (the rest have all been catalogued and tabulated beyond criticism). I am an *amateur*—a lover of art. But such love does not thrive on excess of indulgence: quite the contrary: we must, as the Chinese and the Japanese have long recognized, ration our aesthetic sensations. There are museums enough already to satisfy a normal need, and these museums are full enough, many of them too full. But a museum of *modern* art, it will be said, may exhibit some new thrill, touch some hitherto unexercised chord of sensation. Yes; one painting in a thousand may do this, but the thrill is not worth the trail. There are a thousand easier and better ways of attending the muses. Clough's revised commandment applies with devastating effect to works of art:

Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

If it is objected that I am adopting a blasé attitude in this matter, applying the sentiments of a *roué* of the arts to material intended for the common man, the ordinary citizen of a paternal State, then I must ask for a consideration of the psychological facts. Suppose by propaganda and other inducements we have persuaded this common man to pursue the pilgrimage of art, to expose himself to the impact of a civil patronage exercised on his behalf by his anonymous mentors—what then? When we visit some national or municipal art gallery and observe the people about us—those dim, bored figures gingerly skating over waxed floors, drifting like chilled bees from one fading flower to another—can we believe that anything important is happening to them? 'How the diabolic Whistler,' wrote Timothy Shy at the time, 'would have enjoyed the reopening of the Tate, photographs of which showed three citizens indomitably tackling the pictures and six more reclining hopelessly on a settee, already dazed, sewn up, exhausted, and knocked out by British Art. We never forget a Voice from the Middle West heard in the Uffizi at Florence. "All this darned Art," it wailed, "it just makes your feet hot." ' In a rare case, one in ten thousand,

a dormant sensibility may be awakened. But unless that common man is by present standards very uncommon, the mere fact that he is a man, and has therefore undergone the normal processes of education and social integration, means that he is already deaf to any appeal that the work of art might have for him. His aesthetic sensibility has been killed at school, probably before the age of twelve. It cannot now be revived, except by some treatment equivalent to psycho-analysis. Do not let us deceive ourselves: the common man, such as we produce in our civilization is aesthetically a dead man. He may cultivate art as a 'culture,' as a passport to more exclusive circles of society. He may acquire the patter of appreciation, the accent of understanding. But he is not moved: he does not love: he is not *changed* by his experience. He will not alter his way of life—he will not go out from the art gallery and cast away his ugly possessions, pull down his ugly house, storm the Bastilles where beauty lies imprisoned. He has more *sense*, as we say.

Finally, let us consider the effects of State patronage on the artists. Again, a complicated psychological problem of which only the outlines can be indicated.

First, there is the question of what one might call the scope of art—the aim or intention which is present, perhaps only half-consciously, in the mind of the artist. For a private patron, the artist used to paint with a definite notion of what was expected of him—he knew that the painting would be hung in a living-room, that it would be lived with, that it would have to please a specific 'taste.' But the painter who aims at State patronage—with what preconceptions shall he paint? The picture will be hung in some bleak or pompous gallery—he cannot be sure where it will be hung: it must please the taste of some obscure or unknown official before it is offered to the appreciation of a wandering indifferent public. Not exactly an inspiring prospect for the painter. In some cases, it will mean the abuse of the artist's talent: for example, if he is essentially a miniaturist, he will force himself to paint on a monumental scale. But assuming he can accommodate himself to the scale and environment of a public gallery, the painter must then consider

his anonymous patron. The State with us is not yet a political instrument; where it is the painter must consider the ideology and prejudices of the party in power. But even where the State is still politically neutral in its administration, the painter has still to consider the aims and ideals of the bureaucracy. Again, it is the indefiniteness, the imprecision of the process that is baffling, that fails to inspire. When a painter painted for the Catholic Church, or for the Court of a king, he had a fairly exact idea of what was expected of him: he was faced by a definite task—to paint an altarpiece for a particular position in a particular church. But how shall a contemporary painter set about painting a picture to be bought by the Arts Council and circulated round a thousand art centres?

Let me now suggest another way of looking at the whole problem. Let me return to my starting point, and paraphrase Robert Graves's statement. *Pictures should be painted for painters. For people in general artists should design useful things and be content if the public is unaware that they do anything else.*

Mr. Graves would probably admit that within the term 'poets' should be included putative poets—mute inglorious Miltons who have a mental poetic activity. In the same way my paraphrase would include putative painters—people who have retained their aesthetic sensibility, are consciously aware of a desire to exercise it, but have never had the chance. With that qualification, the statement will stand as an indication of my way of looking at the problem.

The whole business of what is called 'cabinet' painting—painting little rectangles of canvas or board to be hung in private living-rooms, is a relatively recent development in the history of art. It corresponds very closely with the rise of capitalism and was called into being by the acquisitive society, by the bourgeoisie which wanted to invest some of its wealth in *objets d'art*, in relatively small works of art which could be moved from one house to another, and which in case of financial need could easily be disposed of piecemeal.

Before the sixteenth century painters were craftsmen. Generally speaking, they were not exclusively painters. They had

workshops which would turn out any job of interior decoration, and the jobs were usually handed out to them by the Church, sometimes by the city council, sometimes by a prince. But it was always commissioned work, and it was always work with a specific function. The orders which the Church gave to the glass-painter—an obscure corner of the history of art of which I used to have some expert knowledge—were as detailed as a modern contract for building a factory. All the great medieval painters, and Renaissance painters right down to the time of Michelangelo, were craftsmen carrying out formal contracts.

Then, as time went on, the painter and the sculptor were left to their own devices, to express, as we say, their own personalities. There were still specific jobs to be done—portraits to be painted, for example—but in general the artist began to invent free subjects—still lifes, landscapes, *genre* subjects, finally what we call abstractions. A medieval patron would have been quite incapable of understanding why he should pay good gold for a functionless construction of circles and squares. If such a proposal had come within his comprehension, he would have been outraged: he would probably have ordered the insolent painter to be executed.

I am not suggesting that no great works of art were produced in the epoch of cabinet painting. From Giorgione to Picasso a host of exquisite creations, the expression of a great artist's subtle vision and faultless technique, were produced for the capitalist market, for the private delectation of merchant princes and rampageous tyrants, for men of taste who also happened to be men of wealth. But the whole basis of that kind of production has gone. The merchant prince is now the controller in some Government department, with a fat salary but so heavily taxed that he has no money left to indulge in any but the most modest patronage: the tyrants have been tamed and the man of taste has been impoverished. Admittedly, here and there a private fortune is still large enough to leave a margin for indulgence—but it is a shrinking margin. Only in America does private patronage survive on a considerable scale. We must also, at this point, take into consideration the influence of modern developments in

architecture, which leave little room for the hanging of pictures in a house or flat. Contemporary sensibility prefers unencumbered surfaces, unbroken lines, and a maximum of light. I know modern painters who live in modern houses where they do not exhibit even their own paintings. The studio is a place apart, a workshop where objects are made for people who still live in bourgeois houses, or (hopefully) for the State's art galleries.

In short, the cabinet picture has lost, or is quickly losing, all economic and social justification, and to try and keep it alive by State patronage is like trying to keep the dodo alive in a zoo. Indeed, there is more than a fanciful parallel between the museum and the zoo; they are both places where we keep rare and eccentric specimens at public expense. And why not, to be logical, put the artist himself in the zoo: let him have a comfortable cage with a northern light, and there let him produce obsolete art objects to be hung in an aquarium-like building next door.

Cabinet painting is a defunct art, perpetuated by defunct institutions. I do not know what proportion of the sixty thousand students attending art schools in Great Britain any one year are taught easel painting: it is certainly a large proportion, and even if it is a small proportion, easel painting has nevertheless a prestige and a status in art education which is part of the defunct tradition of capitalistic art. The Royal Academy exists to perpetuate this tradition, and a whole system of academic education is geared up to its obsolete standards. No harm would be done to art, in any vital sense of the word, if all this vast machinery of life-classes and antique classes were abolished. The Royal Academy Schools, the Royal College of Art, the Slade School, and many local art schools, are not only perpetuating a defunct tradition: they are luring thousands of young men and women into an obsolete vocation where they can only experience poverty, disillusion, and despair. From this point of view, they are criminal institutions and ought to be abolished forthwith.

And what shall we put in the place of our futile art schools?

There is no simple answer to that question, because what is really involved is a complete social reorientation towards art. I advocate a reform of education which puts art where it should always have been—right in the heart of things. Let us begin with the primary schools. If we can reform our methods of teaching and our attitude towards the objectives of education so that some native aesthetic sensibility is preserved in children, and children are no longer brutalized and anaesthetized by the bludgeoning process of 'learning'—that is to say, hammering conceptual knowledge into their innocent minds—then there would be some human material to work with. You can't make the silk purses of art out of the sow's ears of school certificates. You can't expect the flowering of the creative instinct in an epoch which condemns its children to a *via dolorosa* of examinations.

If we get the foundation right, if we produce children who are healthy, sensitive and wise, rather than children who are brawny, 'clever'¹ and efficient, we can then train them in the techniques of production. Then we can safely teach them how to use tools and machines, because with sensitive fingers and vivid minds they will be incapable of producing or consuming the hideous things they are content with now. Some of them we can teach to be specialists in design—to be industrial designers and architects. To others we can give commissions to work, commissions as specific and detailed as those the medieval artist received. And then, in good time, an art as great as medieval art will take shape.

As for painting easel pictures—well, why not if you, a useful citizen, feel so inclined? You will have your own time in which to paint, just as the poet has his own time for writing verses. You can give your pictures as tokens of regard to your friends, or you can make a little pocket-money by this private hobby. You might paint a great picture in your spare time, just as T. S. Eliot wrote a great poem in his spare time. But you will not any

¹ *Clever* etymologically means something with sharp claws (hence, 'clever as a cat'), and that, of course, is the predatory concept of education which we have evolved under the influence of a competitive economy.

longer, if you are a reasonable person, expect your fellow-taxpayers to support you while you indulge in an activity which no longer has any economic sanction.

If these facts, and my deductions, are admitted, we should then consider whether any useful purpose can be served by the various institutions and organizations which have already been brought into existence. In other words, can we redirect the policy and practices of our museums and schools of art, our ministries of art and education, our art councils and international committees—even UNESCO itself, can we so reorientate the activities of these bodies that they serve art in a creative, and not merely conservative, fashion?

There is, admittedly, no direct solution of cultural problems. Let me reaffirm once again the *radical* nature of cultural growths. Art is an organic phenomenon, a biological process. Like flowers and fruit, plumage and song, it is a product of the life-force itself. I am not trying to reduce art to materialistic factors. I am prepared to admit that human life has a qualitative distinction, a certain spirituality or higher consciousness, which transcends but does not separate it from the rest of animal creation; and by reason of this evolutionary variation, man's art has perhaps a deeper, at any rate a different, biological significance, compared with the song of the nightingale or the plumage of the peacock. But, nevertheless, all these phenomena are within the same scale of creative evolution. Art is human, not divine: profane, not sacred. It does not descend in pentecostal flames: it arises, like a green sap; like a seminal fluid, it issues from the body, and from the body in an unusual state of excitement. This is true whether we are literal, and think of the body of the individual artist; or metaphorical, and think of the body of society. Now though we are quite clear about the psychology of artistic creation in the individual, and even our classicists admit that art is a physical afflatus of some kind, we have never given much consideration to the psychology of artistic creation in a society. We sometimes speak of 'an inspired age,' or 'a creative epoch,' but then we are only speaking metaphorically. But the facts correspond to the figure of speech:

eras, no less than artists, have their afflatus, and a society can be inspired. And that is the problem we should study—the relations between the forms of society and the forms of art, the interflow of vitality from organizations to individuals, the generation of creative activity in the group, between persons and associations. When we have considered those problems in all their aspects—climatic, ethnic, economic, social—then, perhaps, we shall be in a position to give direct support and encouragement to the arts.

Our present activities are futile. We take what exists—the detritus of a defunct civilization—and we assume that by sifting it, cementing it, mixing it with bureaucratic gold or circulating it in unusual channels, we can re-create a past glory, build the foundations of a new civilization. All we can create in that way is an *ersatz* culture, the synthetic product of those factories we call variously universities, colleges or museums. The universities never have produced an art, and never will. All our technical colleges and public schools, even our primary schools and infant schools, are all so many slaughter-houses, institutions for anaesthetizing the artist, for eradicating sensibility, for repeating endlessly and without variation the stamp of a civilization without art.

We must begin again, modestly, patiently. From our historians we must expect a more exact analysis of the social conditions which have produced art in the past. From our psychologists we must expect a more exact analysis of the creative process in man, not merely in the individual artist, but as a process occurring between man and man, for art is not only creation, but also communication. And from our educationalists we must expect a remodelling of the educational system which will preserve and refine man's innate sensibility, to the end that the practical activities of life are no longer clumsy and inept, abortive or destructive; but by securing a perfect equilibrium of the sensuous and intellectual faculties, ensure the first requisite of a creative age.

Poems

Elsewhere

L'existence est ailleurs.—Rimbaud

Profound is inexistence on this earth
Among our human kind:

Profound

The weight of absence on the sleeping heart
That all war's detonations cannot rouse:
Rumour of selfless hordes with eyes
Red-rimmed and haggard, swarming through the dirt
Of ruined palaces: the rear
Of canon-mouths, of saw-toothed mouths, the mouths
Of printing-presses, megaphonic maws
Of the possessed and the psychotic: and the pounding waves
Of automatic labour and the daily shore:
Rocked by this deep
And oil-black ocean's tidal pulse
The stunned soul sleeps
Profoundly absent from its body's condemned house.

The taste of pleasure's now like sand between the teeth;
Worn-out, the nerve is numb; and Death's
Most sumptuous music strikes the ear like wind
Forced dumbly out of emptiness.

The sun

Strikes cold upon our nakedness, and shines
With rays of shadow through the diffuse light
Of interstellar space;
While over the last phase of night
The dead face of the moon hangs like a curse.

Deep in our empty sky hangs like a moon
 The curse of inexistence; while the spirit sleeps
 Profoundly absent from the earth.

But on
 Negation's further shore, the yonder side
 Of sleep and absence, dazzling is the sheer
 Rock-face set like an ice-barred gate
 Beneath that nether tableland's pure height:
 Whose sky is the negation of our sky,
 Where all earth's ruins are rebuilt
 Of stone that sings, and cold fire burns
 The scentless incense of the air:
 Where Time and Number are once more atoned
 And to its true existence the Unnamed returns.

DAVID GASCOYNE

Sceptre-Struck, Spellbound, Beloved

Turn on your side and bear the day to me
 Beloved, sceptre-struck, immured
 In the glass wall of sleep. Slowly
 Uncloud the borealis of your eye
 And show your iceberg secrets, your midnight prizes
 To the green-eyed world and to me. Sins
 Coil upward into thin air when you awaken
 And again morning announces amnesty over
 The serpent-kingdomed bed. Your mother
 Watched with as dove an eye the unforgivable night
 Sigh backward into innocence when you
 Set a bright monument in her amorous sea.
 Look down, Undine, on the trident that struck
 Sons from the rocks of vanity. Turn in the world,
 Sceptre-struck, spellbound, beloved,
 Turn in the world and bear the day to me.

GEORGE BARKER

Llewelyn's Spoon

Sleep; the strange light has not
Yet reached your cot,
Nor undone your fingers' knot,
No years' light slid to call your eyes awake;
Your lids are shut: you f y with a green snake.

A life above twined arms
Where winds' alarms
Await dumb nacre's doomsday charms
Whose Triton trumpets resurrect the sea,
For this coiled shell to give them liberty.

Who shall undo the winds
In your shut hands
Where hides the dropped bud of all minds
In ivory locked, of Chinese intricacy,
First breath, dividing air and land and sea?

If seas could wind a thread,
A sage might read
In the fair silence of your head
A broken grief from which all prints are drawn,
Where the words break and decorate new dawn.

But in those eyes, where wild
Tears form a child,
Desires divorced and reconciled
Sleep where the stars' annunciations meet,
And the world's wrongs are rustling at your feet.

May contradictory joy
Sustain you, boy,
Against the spectre's dwarf envoy,
Like love's frail wool closing your warm life now,
Fresh as rough fields where hands have gone to sow.

We by your nothing made
Mute and afraid,
So little yet so perfect laid,
Stand, where all thoughts are gathered on a guess
Of mystery and suspended happiness.

Joy, supernatural dread
And sorrow's lead
In that loved burden at last shed
Live in great weight the cradle carries light,
Bearing a miracle of breath and sight.

We know, a chance breath rules
All thinking schools,
Those careful measurements and rules;
That when all time is counted there remains
A source of music under the sandgrains.

There in the velvet lies
Near your blue eyes,
Enclosed in its own silences,
A spoon, fore-kindler of your growing days,
Which twelve more months will give you strength
to raise.

It mirrors back a wave,
Silver and grave,
Of dumb light taken from its cave,
In which your bigger eyes one day may see
A tall house leaning, open to the sea.

Wishes fly forward, but
Your eyes are shut
Like violets in their Winter's root,
And the spoon's pictures tottering houses hide
In which this moment is much magnified.

One house above the rest
Shines from its crest;
But the plumed seawaves, three abreast,
Cast out the doors and windows where curled arms,
Cooled on a breath, drive back the barbarous drums.

And there the sudden tide
Flooding the wide
Mud-hollows at the Castle's side,
Pounds tongues with light, the letters' melting-pot,
Where thoughts are broken, and become your thought.

VERNON WATKINS

Flutes

Can it be true the world is a skeleton or cage
Ringing the robin in the blood
Or that the birds of heaven nest
In singing and in rage?
Then the wild briar of imprisoned fury
Called the heart in the breast
Seals up war and flood.
And starshells over our darkening stage
Weave in leaves of tinsel for the troops of mercy,
Blood and tenderness and mercury.

Mills of steel and ice, in a frozen girdle,
Churning saint and criminal
Music through the stream,
Lock love up in fiords.
Their harps are straw. Their effigies in the grange
Wreck in dread ritual.
Eternity and dream.
To carve a stone ear of shells, where echoes range,
Great wheels of anguish, tearing wild seabirds
Round the heads of the deranged.

Then clothe the beggar in the ice of clarity.
He is the mourner for the monk:
An idiot in the tatters of the town
The ruins of immortality.
Lop the steeple, cap and bells, peal out:
—Tower, tumbling clown,
Conceit and politics are drunk:
Inferno is the Mint of cast-off charity:
Shake pride, scorn and anger down: shout
Broken is Earth's roundabout!

J. F. HENDRY

Tannhäuser's End

Tannhäuser heard, but did not understand,
That Latin commination; but he saw
The old man's face, wrinkled and papery-white
Like a cast snake-skin on a bank of flowers,
His silver hairs the frost congealing round
A budded bough. The Pope's hieratic hand
Stood like a branching candle-stick to Heaven,
The bare arm thrust from crimson gold-embroidered
Robes that hung, stiff as though carved in stone,
About his spare but unbent form. Above him rose
The domed basilica, where from the walls,
With flat gold aureoles behind their heads,
Gazed down the ranks on ranks of virgins,
Implacable, with oval, staring eyes; and over the altar
The seven Archangels, planetary spirits,
Seemed to advance, and drew their flaming swords.

Trembling, the pilgrim wrapped his cloak around him,
Descending down and down the marble stair
Between the hooded figures, and went out
Onto the long white roads. And so he passed
Forever from their ken.

He had gone back
To find the secret and enduring forest.
But it was winter now: his upcast eye
Sought there in vain the bright-necked dove, the messenger
Of that soft-breasted goddess whom he loved.
Only the prying magpie from the fir
Would watch him passing with a curious eye; or in the snow
The loping mountain hare that sought those woods
To cram her maw with birch-bark, halted, at gaze.
None knows how many days Tannhäuser wandered on,
Still with the carved harp slung upon his back,
Among whose strings only the bitter wind
Wakened a prelude now—ghost of a song
Sung to gay-mantled ladies in high bower,
While the white lilac fluttered at the window;
What woodland paths he took, at what cold streams
He knelt and drank, or sought with frozen hand
Among the branches of the mountain-ash
Those few bright berries which the redwing left.
And none can tell if on some bank of snow
At last he fell, exhausted,
And if it was in dreams the dying man
Was led again into the lighted hall
Of the wise fairy he had honoured once,
A boy, beneath the May-day hawthorn tree:
Fru Frekë, the good housewife,
Inventor of the small blue-flowering flax-plant,
Rewarding the industrious servant-girls
With showers of gold; who rides by summer nights
On wild grey geese about a rounding moon
With her bright waiting women (she claims as such
All those who die unmarried).
Or yet perhaps no lonely woodcutter
Found late his frozen body (which the wolf
Spared) in the woods. For he had come at last
Into the echoing cave beneath the mountain;
And well-known hands had drawn him down

Into the ancient centre of the world,
The mothering-place beneath the vaulted earth,
Her cool death-kingdom. 'Rest now, sleep
O Lover, o child. . . '

But upon Lateran the steady chanting
Suddenly stopped, as a great invisible angel
Were passing over them;
While in the old man's grasp his withered rod
Broke all at once into green leaves and petals;
And wandered then about those stony cells
Through motionless faint air
The unexpected holy scent of roses.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

The Power of Love

And shall I be in power of love again?
For, shorn to a storey now, the plateglass world
shoots into space, revolving like a door,
the bobbing of the five-foot-high oncoming
shine of the hats and shoes. And buses drone
a world of silence where a careful tune
may whistle flatly through an empty alley.

And must I be in power of love again?
That was a wave as tall as carnival
travelling the world.

And made between the breasts
a mad confessional of miry worlds,
of whispered and most ancient worlds between
the idiot breasts, like marble hasps, which dropped
to emptiness the world of broken love.
And shall I be in power of love again?

For there were women, mowed by wall of love
which beat their weak hips on. And dark asides,
vile squeaks, slipped out with scraps of love they bore.
And still swept on twin tides majestic
to good and ill, and these were one and love,
their white roots torn and sharp, with clots of earth
and tweaks of grass to stick in hair or house.

Oh must I be in power of love again,
when now the streets are blank and dark with tears,
and through a world which seems as if God once
had been and was no more, I hear Love, mad
at heart, drive on to any words or silence.

KATHLEEN NOTT

To My Son

aged eight

Oh little body, do not die.
The soul looks out through wide blue eyes
So questioningly into mine,
That my tormented soul replies
'Oh little body do not die.
You hold the soul that talks to me
Although our conversation be
As wordless as the windy sky.'

So looked my father at the last
Right in my soul, before he died,
Though words we spoke went heedless past
As London traffic roar outside.
And now the same blue eyes I see
Look through me from my little son,
So questioning, so searchingly
That youthfulness and age are one.

My father looked at me and died
Before my soul made full reply.
Lord, leave this other Light alight—
Oh little body, do not die.

JOHN BETJEMAN

Folding a Shirt

Folding a shirt, a woman stands
still for a moment, to recall
warmth of flesh, her careful hands

heavy on a sleeve, recall
a gesture or the touch of love;
she leans against the kitchen wall

listening for a word of love,
but only finds a sound like fear
running through the rooms above.

With folded clothes she folds her fear
but cannot put desires away
and cannot make the silence hear.

Unwillingly she puts away
the bread, the wine, the knife,
smooths the bed where lovers lay

while time's unhesitating knife
cut away the living hours,
the common rituals of life.

DENISE LEVERTOV

Prayer Til Whitna God

Hou lang, O Lord, or we learn tae luve ane anither,
 Hou lang or we quaet the clash o wir clypan tongues,
 Hou lang or we mind that men are aa thegither
 Heirs o their twa-three richts and hunder wrangs?

Yestreen I spak wi a haill clanjamfrie o craiteurs
 That culdna but glunsh and girn at the feck o fowks
 (*Sic tinks, wi their scabrous weys and scunnersome naiturs!*)
 Sen aa their neibours were gomerils, gleds, or gowks.

'Och aye, she got merriet in time—but wha was the faither?'
 'It's *Sorry, maun rin!* whaniver his turn comes roun.'
 'Her man daesna buy her the claes she swanks in either.'
 'He griets ower ilka farden he's forced tae pit down.'

'A dominie—him? He hasna the harns o a cuddie.'
 'She's taen tae religion nou she's been feart frae the booze.'
 'She'll niver see fifty again, tho her chiel's jist a laddie.'
 'Whit wey he can gang wi her, gyaud! I canna jalouse.'

A yammer and yatter o claikan clishmaclavers,
 A stab at the craig o gentrice in ilka word—
 Hou lang or we turn frae aa six hauntand havers
 And daur tae loo as yet we niver hae daured?

Hou lang or we scan wir herts for their strangmaist pyson
 And ken it the stoun o wir ain self-hatred's stang?
 Hou lang or thon hate is owerset tae luve and reason?
 Hou lang, O Lord, or we needna speir *Hou lang?*

ALEXANDER SCOTT

Criticism

The Powys Family

LITTLETON C. POWYS

I. *Our Ancestry*

Of my father's family the genealogical table goes back to the fifteenth century, to one William Powys of Ludlow. In the eighteenth century when my great-grandfather's brother, who was a Member of Parliament for one of the constituencies of Northamptonshire, was created Lord Lilford, it was the fashion to prove the royal descent of families; and the old *Burke's Peerage* in its red cover, which used to stand on one of the shelves in my father's study, recorded that the family traced its descent through the barons of Main-yn-Meifod and the princes of Powys to Rodri Mawr, king of all Wales. Now that the world has become more honest and less romantic, the table does not go further back than the Ludlow representative. But I have little doubt that the name tells its own story; it would never have been ours had not our ancestors come from the hills and valleys of Montgomeryshire and Merioneth, the hills and valleys of Powysland.

And we certainly have that enthusiasm, that fire, that zeal, and in John's case, that eloquence which are generally connected with Wales. But on our father's side there is much blood, besides Welsh, in our veins; Scotch, Swiss, and much Saxon is also there.

My mother's grandfather was Dr. John Johnson, the poet Cowper's 'Johnny Johnson of Norfolk.' He was the poet's first cousin once removed, through his mother who was a Donne, as was also my great-grandfather's mother. And here again there

is another link with Wales. The Donnes of Wales came to an end in the fifteenth century when the heiress Jane Donne married Thomas ap Phillips and Picton Castle and Kidwelly passed to the Phillips' family. It seems to me reasonable to hold that the love of letters which has played such a part in our lives, is a legacy from our presumed ancestor John Donne, the Dean of St. Paul's, a descendant of the Welsh Donnes. The poet Cowper refers to him as 'our ancestor.'

This is, perhaps, the moment to point out an aspect in which our ancestry is unusual. Our father was a country parson; his father was a country parson; and so, too, was my great-grandfather: three generations of parsons; then on my mother's side, her father was the rector of Yaxham, the family living, and so was her grandfather, Dr. John Johnson, who built the rectory. That is to say we have in our veins the blood of these five clergymen.

Is it to be wondered at that not one of the six male members of the family has been ordained, or that there has been considerably more free thinking in our generation than ever before? Reaction had set in with a vengeance. There has, however, since been a throwback; for my brother John's son, Littleton Alfred, was ordained and was a country parson, but recently he has been received into the Church of Rome and is a priest in that denomination.

I think, however, if the writings of my brothers are considered, the influence of these generations of clergy is noticeable. John Cowper, A. R. Powys, and Llewelyn are all preachers, always wanting to force some point or other upon their readers; while Theodore speaks in parables; and my wife used to tell me that my style was distinctly biblical.

Our forefathers' book was the Bible; and, whether at home or staying with our grandfather, we were never allowed to forget this fact. And so it came about that scripture was a subject at which we all won prizes at school.

Now I come to our parents and their gifts to us; and to consider them and all we owe to them will give me great pleasure.

2. Our Father

He was born at Stalbridge Rectory in Dorset in 1843. The living belongs to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and had been presented to my grandfather on his resigning his fellowship at that college when he married. Of my father's childhood we know little, except from drawings and paintings of him and his elder brother by his mother and his aunt, and from the stories he used to tell us of bird-nesting adventures, and fishing expeditions, and his own drawings of birds and flowers.

His development intellectually was slow, and he did not follow his brother to Sherborne School. His first school was at Mappowder, a little village in the centre of Dorset, and from there he went to a school at Kennilworth. It was then found necessary that he should have extra tuition before going up to Cambridge—and the next move was an eventful one, for it was decided that he should go to William Cowper Johnson, Rector of Yaxham, in Norfolk. Here it was that he first met Mary Cowper Johnson, our mother.

This grandfather, like my father's father, had been at Corpus Christi, Cambridge, and he too was a wrangler; but this first-rate ability for mathematics seems to have ended with them: for our father only obtained a second-class in the tripos, and not one of his children has shown any taste or aptitude for the subject.

After taking his degree, our father was offered a mastership at Repton, but he decided to take holy orders. He was ordained by the Bishop of Salisbury and became curate-in-charge of Bradford Abbas, a village not far from Sherborne. And it was to Bradford Abbas that in 1871 he brought his bride, Mary Cowper. Early in 1872 they went to Shirley in Derbyshire, a living in the gift of his half-sister, Mrs. Shirley, and it was at Shirley Vicarage that the first five members of the family were born.

There it was that I first became conscious of my father's presence, and began to know him and to trust him. From that time until the end of his long life, when a series of slight strokes gradually deprived him of his faculties, there was in him no

variableness, nor shadow of turning, he was always the same, always to be depended upon; with him as a father there was that feeling of security in the family for which we all pray to-day. Never even in play did he say anything to us children that was not true. We knew exactly where we were with him. He was the most honest and simple-minded man I have ever known.

In 1879, his brother, Littleton, a major in the army, died of cholera at Kandahar, and he felt he must move south so as to be near his mother who now lived at Weymouth. He accepted the curacy of St. Peter's, Dorchester, and to Dorchester he took his wife and five children. During the six years we lived in that historic town three more children were born, and then in 1885 he was offered the living of Montacute which, though twenty miles further inland, was in easy reach of Weymouth and gave him just the house he wanted for his wife and children; and to Montacute the family moved at the beginning of the following year.

For thirty-two years he was the Vicar of Montacute, and it is of him at Montacute that I will try to draw a picture.

He was an impressive figure. Well nigh six foot tall, with high broad shoulders and a deep chest. In his Cambridge days, he delighted in rowing, boxing, and walking, and this love of walking was with him all his life. He had an arresting face, a broad, not very high, forehead with beetling brows that overhung his deep-set grey-blue eyes, wavy grey hair and side-whiskers, a good nose and a long upper lip which he had a way of pulling down and making still longer when stirred by any strong emotional feeling; he had a determined chin and jaw and no one who saw him could fail to recognize his powerful personality.

He was a man of few words, very proud, completely independent and self-reliant; he had an amazing self-control, for which he prayed daily, and this enabled him to master a deeply passionate nature. When amused, his laughter, which he often tried to suppress, was irresistible. I never knew him afraid of anything. He despised the social world with its frivolities; pomp

and ceremony meant nothing to him; he had no ambition for preferment. All he wanted was to be left alone with his wife and family, to do his duty in the work to which he had dedicated his life, and to find recreation in gardening or in walking amid the woods and lanes, the hills and meadows that surrounded his home. Few country clergymen could have fulfilled their tasks more conscientiously than he.

Whenever he had an afternoon free he would spend it in walking to some outlying hamlet or farm, and would always be accompanied by two or three of his children. As he went along he would point out to us flowers, birds, and butterflies, and he did this in a way that made us feel, not that he was giving us natural history lessons, but that he loved those things so much, that he wanted us to share his pleasure. This is the right way of inspiring the young with an interest in these soul-uplifting things.

He had been brought up in the Evangelical school; his faith was the simple faith of his fathers. He had no dealing with metaphysical difficulties. The Bible was everything to him. In church he conducted the services in a dignified and impressive manner; but it was in the homes of parishioners in which he learnt of their sorrows and their joys, and gave them his sympathy, his advice and his help that he was nearest to them.

No one could call him a man of letters. He read little except books connected with his clerical work; but he had a taste for literature, and was always happy in the winter evenings, when, after the day's work was done, our mother read to him as he lay on the drawing-room sofa making nets. Many a good book was enjoyed in this way.

What then have we inherited from him? These, I think, are the qualities which he has passed on to us, and which each one of us possesses to a greater or less degree: an intense zeal for and enjoyment of life; a love of simple things; independence of character; self-reliance; indifference to public opinion; a violent temper when roused; a keen interest in all the phenomena of nature; a love of walking; and family unity.

3. *Our Mother*

To write of our mother is a much more difficult task; for she was as complex as our father was simple.

She was independent, but at the same time very dependent; she was morally courageous, but physically timid; eager for freedom, yet so dominated by a sense of duty, that she never enjoyed it; full of imagination and romantic ideas, but they were suppressed by the life that she had chosen; in her early years a lover of life but always afraid of it; proud of her children and zealous for their success, yet possessed with a horror of publicity and a fear of disaster; a devoted supporter of her husband's faith, but with a mind as active as hers there may well have been questionings and doubts which she shared with no one.

Free play she gave in full to one quality alone, and that the greatest of all—Love. I have recently read the letters she wrote to her sisters during her married life, and to me it seemed amazing that a human heart could possess such a capacity for love. She loved her husband, she loved each one of her children. Her greatest ambition was that love should reign in her home, and her earnest prayer that her children should love one another. My brother Llewelyn's letters have testified that this prayer was answered.

She was of medium height and moved easily and unaffectedly. She was always simple, modest and neat in her dress. Never have I known anyone less worldly; fashion plates meant nothing to her. But she could not fail to make an impression on anyone who met her with her striking face, with its good brow crowned with lovely rippling hair, parted madonna-like in the middle, brown in her youth and gradually turning first grey, then white, but never losing its natural waviness; the deep-set brown eyes were perhaps her chief feature, and a good nose, a mobile mouth, and a well-shaped chin completed her pleasing oval face.

As a young girl, so her sisters used to tell us, she was gay and the life of the party. She was full of fun and a most entertaining narrator of incidents in the village life. She entered regularly into local social life and was very keen about croquet

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As a young girl, so her sisters used to tell us, she was gay and the life of the party. She was full of fun and a most entertaining narrator of incidents in the village life. She entered regularly into local social life and was very keen about croquet

and archery. She had a deep love of poetry and literature and a voracious appetite for reading. Drawing and painting appealed to her, and when staying with her aunt at Esher she had lessons in London and used to go to art galleries and exhibitions. Her sketch books show that she had no small gifts in this direction.

She loved music and this love was increased under the influence of the Reeves family with whom she had come into contact.

With these tastes and gifts she seemed made for an artistic life. But when our father came and claimed her for his own, she willingly diverted her burning zeal for the arts into the channel of her devotion to him and the life that was his. Every now and then in her early married life she would make a sketch or paint some bird or butterfly or shell, but her busy domestic life soon made this impossible. And how could her love for music thrive with a husband who knew not one note from another?

But her love of literature never waned, and she dedicated to it one hour or so every evening after she had seen the whole household to bed. Then in the quiet house she would sit in the drawing room, reading and choosing the passages that pleased her most, which were always entered in pencil in the fly-leaf at the end of the book. As her sons became older they were allowed to share this hour with her, reading and being read to and talking about books—a privilege treasured by each one of us.

There is one side of her life to which I have not yet referred, her approach to nature, for it differed from that of her husband. Her love of Nature was 'inward and spiritual'; not that the little plants that she tended were not dear to her, or that she did not examine and admire the wild flowers which our father invariably brought to her on his return from his walks; but Nature meant more to her than that, and her far-off gaze, as she looked through the drawing-room window at the moon behind the fern-like tracery of the leaves of the old acacia tree, or over the fields covered with snow, or at the wood-clad hill with the rooks circling around it, saw more than the moon, more than the snow-covered fields, more than the wood-clad hill; her soul was, I know it now, in close communion with the spirit of the universe.

She made a wonderfully happy home for her children. She thought of her husband first, and saw that he had all he wanted, and then entered whole-heartedly into what each of her children was doing. She must have had psychological insight beyond the ordinary, for she seemed to understand each of their differing minds, and she would give them her sympathy wherever their interests lay.

The bearing of eleven children, and the never-ending responsibility of looking after them and her husband, gradually had their effect upon her health, and the joy of life was dimmed. All the suffering she had borne, and seen others bear, caused her to adopt a fatalistic attitude to life—an attitude of resignation; in Matthew Arnold's words she 'seemed to bear rather than rejoice.' It was at that time that Llewelyn, who had not known her, as I did, in her younger days, wrote of her as 'that strange woman who enjoyed sorrow rather than joy.'

A definite illness came; but she went on without murmuring, doing what daily little things she could for her husband's comfort. An operation was advised which might possibly have saved her life, but she refused it; she preferred to let Nature run its course. Then quite suddenly, on July 30, 1914, just before war was declared on Germany, she passed into the spirit world.

And what has she given her children?

All those cravings for art and literature and self-expression, which during her married life she had so largely suppressed, were released in them. All our varying artistic inspirations came from her; from her came my love of games and what skill I possessed in playing them. To some of us she also left a higher bequest—that almost mystical approach to Nature which is able to 'calm and console.' And every one of us owes to her this best gift of all—she taught us the real meaning of 'Love one another.'

4. *Montacute*

The Vicarage, an Early Victorian house, solidly built with a slate roof and sash windows and with walls covered with roses,

honeysuckle, and jasmine seemed to have been made for homely, comfortable, and country life.

Fortunately an additional wing had been added, which with its many small rooms was a godsend to us, and made it possible for the house to shelter our father and mother, their eleven children (the three youngest were born in it), a governess, Emily the nurse, Ellen the cook, two other maids, and the not infrequent guest.

But home did not end with the Vicarage. It included the picturesque stone-built village, the church, the Abbey Farm, the stately Elizabethan mansion across the field, and all the hills, and woods and meadows that surrounded us; and especially should I mention Ham Hill with its quarries and grassy slopes, which provided a wonderful playground. The Phelps family, who owned all the country round, were very good to us; we were allowed to go where we liked, and every nook and corner was known to us.

And how fortunate to be born one of a large family! For, when there are many brothers and sisters, there must be give and take, and unselfishness; there is little chance of spoilt children. The constant interchange of ideas is excellent; the family becomes entirely self-dependent; it provides its own games and amusements and requires no outside help; and in those Victorian days, before the arrival of the infernal internal combustion engine had disturbed country life, when bicycles were only in their infancy, when wireless and cinema were unknown, and gramophones rare, every form of entertainment had to be home-made, and this could not be achieved without the use of the imagination.

One disadvantage (if it is a disadvantage) of a large family lay in its members becoming so dependent on each other that they had no desire whatsoever for social life outside the family circle. We hated being asked to parties and dances and finding ourselves in the midst of strange people whose ways were not our ways. The most excellent Mrs. Phelps of Montacute House did her best to break us of this unsociable habit, and we owe much to her inasmuch as she was partially successful. But the

attitude of mind, inherited from our father, who always lived in splendid isolation, tended to make us independent of convention, and to pay little attention to public opinion.

There is yet another advantage in a large family, and that is the simplicity of its life. The children are brought up to know that they must live without luxuries in food and dress: they learn the arts of doing without and making much of a little; lessons of the utmost value through life.

There is another side of our life to which I must refer: our life as the sons and daughters of the vicar of the parish. Our mother used to say to us: 'The vicarage is like a castle set on a hill; everything that happens in it is known.' Her wish was that we should do nothing which would impede her husband's work among his people; and we willingly fell in with the routine which was expected of us. We went to church morning and evening on Sundays; we went with our father to his prayer and missionary meetings: both John and Llewelyn used to go to the men's class and talk to them; John also taught in the Sunday school. My two eldest sisters taught in the Sunday school and played the organ if the organist was away. We rarely missed morning and evening prayers at home; our mother did her best to teach all her children their catechism and Bible stories, and to interest them in missionary work. And however much our thoughts might be centred on other matters, we never failed to play our part, and carry out her wishes.

Apart from these religious duties, so naturally and easily shouldered, there was absolute freedom in the home. We could do exactly what we liked, and when you read that Llewelyn's attitude to institutional Christianity was 'his reaction from the dogma and darkness of his upbringing' you may take it from me there is no truth in it. No one was forced to do anything; any form of constraint or compulsion was completely contrary to our mother's view of bringing up her children. She stood for freedom, and our father countenanced it; and I think you will acknowledge that their children developed it to a remarkable degree.

5. *The Children*

I will take the girls first, beginning with the youngest. Of my sister *Lucy* (b. 1890) I will only say that of all the children she was the most like her mother. She had those qualities of gentleness, unselfishness, humility, and love that her mother possessed. She married early in life before she had seen anything of the world, and has had a happy home life, for many years on the banks of the river Test, where her husband had a mill. Books and nature, shared with her daughter, were everything to her; recently her husband has died, and her daughter has married and lives in Kenya.

Catharine Philippa (b. 1886), the first Montacute baby, fair-haired with big grey eyes, with an ardently affectionate nature, was a lovable child. But her feelings were far too intense to make life easy.

Her chief interests in early days lay in the farm life round her home; she loved animals, and they seemed to recognize this, and she could do anything she liked with them. When our father retired from Montacute, for a time she ran a small farm in the village, not without success.

She had often been with her parents to Sidmouth on their holidays, and there she came to know the fishing community. This came about through her having read *The Poor Man's Home*, and having made the acquaintance of the author, Stephen Reynolds, who lived and worked with the fisher folk and was their real friend. Their calling evoked all her enthusiasm, and subsequently she would go with them on their excursions by day and by night and live their life; indeed, she took a small house in Sidmouth so as to be able to enter into that life more completely.

I read through the draft of a novel of hers, the background of which was that south coast town, and the life of the fishermen; it was a very exciting and realistic story, but it was never published. If only the gods had given her as great a mastery of language as she has imagination, the world would have welcomed more of her novels than just her one, *Black Thorn Winter*, a book

which was in itself an achievement and a success. Some imaginative poems by her in free verse have been published in magazines and privately; but, here again, she has been handicapped by a lack of knowledge of the technique of poetry and of the power of expressing herself in ordered verse.

I now come to my sister *Marian*, Mrs. Marian Powys-Grey (b. 1882), whose life's story with its achievements is, indeed, a remarkable one. She was born at Dorchester and had her mother's dark brown eyes, a mass of curly brown hair, and attractive features. She had good intelligence, was quick to learn, and made good progress at the Norwich High School, to which she used to go from her aunt's home in that city.

On her return to Montacute the Victorian custom would have been for her to stay at home and help her parents; but Marian would have none of this, and set to work to equip herself for a more interesting life. She mastered shorthand and typewriting, and then learnt how to make Honiton pillow-lace; this led to the study of lace in general, and she paid visits to the Continent to the lace-making countries, Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany. Then, having ability, independence, and confidence in herself, she decided to set forth into the world to seek her fortune. And I remember my wife and myself going down to Southampton to see her off to America in the *Olympic*.

There she began her career as a typist, but a skating accident made her give up her appointment. She immediately decided to put her knowledge of lace-making into effect and boldly started 'The Little Devonshire Lace Shop' in New York city. This proved so successful that before long she was able to move into larger premises in Madison Avenue, increasing her rent from 600 dollars per annum to 5,000 dollars. All this time she was giving lectures on lace, and at the Panama Exhibition won the gold medal for lace design.

Marian's life has been an exciting one. The value of her wares exposed her to dangers of burglary and theft, both of which she experienced, and when sleeping in her studio she would have a revolver under her pillow. She is called in to appraise and arrange the laces at the National Museum at Washington. In any time

of doubt the Government and the Customs always consult her. If there is a dispute between the Government and importers she is called upon as the expert witness. The lawyers always consult her before taking a case at all. Sometimes she is for the importers and sometimes for the Government, and she says she rarely loses her case.

My sister *Eleanor* (b. 1879) was a very vivacious, attractive, sensitive child, full of romantic and poetic ideas, and I always wonder what she would have done in the world had she lived. She had always been delicate, and in 1893 appendicitis followed by complications was too much for her frail body, and she died at the age of 13.

And now I come to my eldest sister, *Gertrude* (b. 1877). She, like me, has a happy temperament and has enjoyed life. She used to enter into all the games and amusements of her brothers; and early in life showed that interest in her younger brothers and sisters which she had developed so thoroughly in after life; for since our mother died in 1914 Gertrude has been the very centre of the family and has helped with her wonderful sympathy and love each one of us, if ever difficult circumstances have arisen.

Her education was entirely in the hands of resident governesses. In due course she went for some years to the Slade School to study painting and afterwards to Paris; and to Paris she would return whenever she could free herself from the entanglements of the village; for at home she helped her father in all sorts of ways, in fact she played the part of a curate. So busy has her life been in her service for others that she has never been really free to develop her art to the full. Notwithstanding, her paintings, both portraits and landscapes, hang on many walls in the country. Some of her portraits are remarkable. I, myself, possess two which give me complete satisfaction—one of my father in his latter years and the other of Emily Clare, the family nurse, to whom we all owe so much.

Some years ago some of her pictures were hung at an exhibition in Paris at the Salon de la Nationale and I read high praise of her work in the French Art Journals. The exhibition of her paintings held in New Bond Street in 1937 was a great success.

In addition, some of her brother's books have been decorated with her excellent woodcuts.

In writing of the achievements of the male members of the family, I shall begin with those two whose names are not recorded in *Who's Who*: my brother William and myself.

William (b. 1888) was born at Montacute, and all his childhood was spent in that happy home. He was a remarkable little boy to look at: his head was covered with hyacinth curls, light flaxen in colour, and he had large, deep brown eyes—a rare combination. 'My Benjamin' his mother used to call him.

Like Theodore he was always happy by himself, and took possession of his elder brother's 'Bushes Home.' From early childhood he was interested in animals and birds, and later became so familiar with them that, by imitating their cries, he could bring them to him. Like Llewelyn he was backward in learning when he went to school, but unlike him he was not sociable, and his friends were those who had tastes similar to his own. From Sherborne School he went on to a farm at Montacute so as to have a practical training in farming; then, having run a farm of his own for some years to gain experience, he went to Kenya in 1913. Here, in spite of the interruption of the war, in which he served first in the British East African Mounted Rifles and then as a collector of cattle which he used to drive from the Belgian Congo to our troops in the east, being awarded the Croix de Guerre de Leopold II, he has been remarkably successful and now holds a vast estate. He has proved himself a most capable and enterprising farmer. He is in his element with birds and wild animals all around him, and in his dealings with the latter he is as fearless as was his Uncle Littleton in his big game shooting expeditions in the jungles of Ceylon and India.

William's one literary production is a first-rate article on the breeding and rearing of sheep in that colony. And I may add that his water colour landscapes, though not finished productions (he has had no training), are singularly effective.

Now for myself (b. 1874). My childhood and schooldays were very happy. I was an ordinary boy who took things as they

came, made friends easily, and enjoyed orthodox games. I used to have no great satisfaction in John's invented games. I preferred drawing and painting quietly by myself. But quite early in life, encouraged by our father, I became interested in natural history and in fishing; and the butterflies of the Dorchester fields and the Weymouth cliffs, and the fish of the Frome and of the Wissey in Norfolk, filled my waking and sleeping thoughts.

At school, although I was in the sixth form for three years, games and my friends meant so much to me that I fear academically I was not very industrious, and I failed to win a scholarship at Cambridge. But when the time came for me to leave Sherborne, I had received much from that school to help me through life.

As to my own achievements I think the chief one is that no one could have had a happier life than mine. For twenty-eight years I worked in a profession which I loved, and my reward lay in the work done and in the many life-long friendships I made, not only among my old pupils, but also with many others whom I met. On coming down from Cambridge, I spent five and a half years at Kings School, Bruton, and three and a half at Llandovery, where I felt entirely at home with the Welsh boys, before returning to Sherborne as headmaster of the preparatory school. I worked there for nearly twenty years, when, acting on my doctor's orders, I retired in 1923. Since then I have lived in Sherborne and have not been idle.

Games meant a very great deal to me in my young days, and I had some success with them, being captain of cricket at Sherborne, and captain of both cricket and football at my college at Cambridge. I played Rugby football for Somerset on and off for five years, and in 1899 was given an international trial (South and West v. London and Varsities). I adored cricket, but did not play for any first-class side. I tried my best to interest my younger brothers in games; the only one with whom I succeeded was Llewelyn, and his enthusiasm for them lasted only for a short time. But my games helped me very much in my life's work; indeed, every appointment I held in life was made on the Sherborne School cricket ground!

My life was very different from that of my brothers, and I

rather think it was not a bad thing for us all that this was so. They certainly never allowed me to consider that my scholastic world was the only world. Yet difference of opinion as to the way life should be lived never once interfered with the affectionate relations that existed between us.

The all-absorbing work of a schoolmaster, who is also responsible for a house full of boys, does not allow much time for self-cultivation. So it was a great joy to me when, on retiring, I found more opportunity for reading and thinking and indulging my love of natural history.

I also did a little writing of articles for papers, and finally wrote *The Joy of It*. And to judge by the reviews the book received and the number of letters of appreciation that were written to me, this simply written book was a great success. In 1942 I lost my wife, who, for thirty-eight years, had shared everything with me in a perfect married life, and the last chapter of my life commenced. This was illuminated by my second wife, Miss Elizabeth Myers, the author, whose lovely and brilliant mind was my constant inspiration; she died on May 24, 1947.

Now for the four Powyses in *Who's Who*: I will take A. R. Powys (b. 1881; d. 1936), the architect, first.

As a child he was quite different in his tastes from his brothers. From the very beginning of his life his interest lay in building. In the nursery there was a fine store of wooden bricks, and one rarely went into it without finding him putting one brick on the top of another, and then standing back to see the effect upon the whole. He was remarkably handsome, but singularly shy and reserved, and for a long time seemed to lack self-confidence.

In school work he never greatly distinguished himself, but he went along quietly and passed his examinations. Looking back upon his Sherborne days, he would remember chiefly the carpenter's shop, where he spent every hour he could and was extremely happy; nor could he forget the Abbey and the impressive fifteenth century buildings of that old Saxon town. He was not particularly sociable, but the friends he did make

remained friends for life. He left school early and was articled to an architect in Yeovil. When he had passed his examinations, he joined Mr. Weir, of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and learnt the methods used in the repairs of old buildings. For five succeeding years he supervised the repair of churches in all parts of England. Then after working for four years in London he was in 1912 appointed secretary of the Society, which post he held for nearly a quarter of a century until his death in 1936. His life's work was of the utmost value to his country, and this was recognized by his being made a Companion of the British Empire.

Each of the three most widely known members of the family, Llewelyn, Theodore, and John Cowper, has his admirers, who consider the writings of their favourite as above those of the other two. My own opinion is that it is futile to try and place them in order of merit; for in writing they differ so much the one from the other, and each excels in his particular style.

To take *Llewelyn* (b. 1884; d. 1939) first: I doubt if there were ever a more beautiful little boy than he; he loved the world from the very beginning, and found every one kind to him; he laid himself out to make himself loved by one and all and he succeeded. Who could resist his sunny laughter, his golden curls, and his winning ways? The glory of life (free from those side issues which are unavoidable later on) was his indeed in those early days. He revelled in his home life, in the games he played, and the walks he went with his brothers and sisters.

But, unfortunately, he had no love of lessons, and he was behind-hand in the elements of learning when eleven years old he went to the Preparatory School at Sherborne. There he was happy, he made friends with everyone, was very keen about games and became captain of football; and he went on to the big school still of the opinion that comradeship and games were more important than learning. In those days I was his hero, and he would spend hours at home practising with me at football, and enjoying my companionship as, indeed, I did his. But when he found himself faced with examinations for Cambridge, a rude awakening came. By dint of hard work he eventually qualified

for Corpus Christi College. Meantime his interest in games had diminished, and his interest in literature had taken its place, thanks to John, under whose influence he had passed, and he began to devote himself to reading.

At Cambridge once again life with his friends meant more to him than study, and he finally had to take an ordinary degree. But from that time onwards, in spite of the various teaching jobs he took to provide his livelihood, he read and thought and prepared himself for the literary career he had at the back of his mind.

When it actually was that he lost his faith in the religion of his fathers, I do not know; but doubts were in his mind before he left school, and his own illness and all the sufferings of others he had seen must have had their effect upon him.

It was in the autumn of 1909, when he was helping me at Sherborne, that the breakdown of his health occurred. I shall pass by his experiences of the next years in Switzerland, at home, in Kenya, from which he returned after the war was over, fully determined to devote the rest of his life to writing. To America, to his brother John he went, and it was in that country that his first books were published; and it was there that he met Alyse Gregory, herself a gifted writer, whom he married, and who from that time to his death devoted herself to helping and encouraging him in his life's work.

Much of his success as a writer lies in his power of observation, and in the alertness and sensitiveness of his mind, which enables him to see in human beings and in nature so much that is hidden from ordinary eyes. And what he sees he presents to the world in language which may well be a model for future writers. Personally, I think he is at his best as an essayist: those essays of his on great men, such as *Thirteen Worthies*, *Cupbearers of Wine and Hellebore*, and others are all admirable. But my favourite collections are his Somerset and Dorset essays and the *Swiss Essays* published posthumously last Christmas.

He excels, too, in his autobiographical writings, of which there are many; these are largely drawn from his diaries which he kept regularly from very early days, in itself no small achievement;

of these, *Ebony and Ivory*, *Black Laughter*, and *Skin for Skin* are examples.

Further, he has conscientiously and powerfully forced upon his readers his philosophy, that old philosophy of Epicurus: he urged them to make the most of every moment they were alive. In doing so he made violent attacks upon institutional Christianity, as in *The Pathetic Fallacy*, *Impassioned Clay*, and elsewhere.

And, finally, I must mention the last book published in his lifetime—a book that gave him great pleasure in writing—that lovely idyll *Love and Death*, imaginarily autobiographical in matter, and full of poetic prose and apt and beautiful quotations.

It was in December 1939, at Clavadel in Switzerland, that the gallant struggle he had waged with ill-health for more than thirty years came to an end; and the many tributes to him that I read gave me much pleasure and made me realize that his life's work had not been in vain.

One of my mother's letters referring to *Theodore* (b. 1875) as a small child gives a pleasing picture of him. He loved going out for walks with her and early began to go off by himself. 'To go off by himself' was characteristic of him through life; both at Dorchester and at Montacute he made for himself a hiding place in the shrubbery, which he called 'Bushes Home,' and there he would spend hours by himself, thinking his own thoughts undisturbed.

Even in his education he 'went off by himself'; without his brothers he went to Dorchester Grammar School, to the Sherborne Preparatory School, to a school at Aldeburgh run by Mr. Wilkinson; and after a practical training on a Suffolk farm, he started on his own, farming in that county far from his relations. He was by no means unsuccessful. But farming did not give him the opportunity he sought of escaping from the world; so he gave it up and found seclusion in a small seaside village in Dorset called Studland. This place became too fashionable for him, so off he went again searching Dorset for the hidden home, and this time he found the village of Chaldon which suited all his requirements. In this village too he found

his wife, and they lived there together very happily for many years. They had two boys, the elder of whom lost his life in Kenya, and the younger, Francis, is a lover of books and has written poetry.

Recently he has moved with his wife and adopted daughter to Mappowder, and there, quite close to the village church, he lives his quiet life and is happy.

My mentioning the church recalls to my mind another letter of my mother who describes him as a good, thoughtful little boy who was interested in the services in church; that picture also has proved a true one of him in after life; for none of us has considered life and death and good and evil with greater earnestness than he. And, though there are some horrible scenes in his allegories, and though he makes attacks upon the insincerity of many country clergy, one always feels that his Mr. Jar or his Mr. Weston is not far away to put things right. His first book to be published as *An Interpretation of Genesis*, which consisted of a discourse between Moses and Zetetes—a book which shows how the tendency of his childhood to religious thought developed.

All the books on which Theodore's reputation was built were published between 1923 and 1935—that is to say between the ages of forty-eight and sixty. In the latter year he had an illness, and since then has not found himself capable of coping with writing.

It was in 1923 that public attention was attracted to him by his book *The Left Leg*, which consisted of three long short stories. It was received with almost universal acclamation, and I remember the joy and pride I felt as I read the reviews. Then, for twelve years, book followed book, and his admirers and detractors increased in number. I have not read them all; indeed, I often found it difficult to look at life as he did, and was not always happy in reading them; but his masterpiece, *Mr. Weston's Good Wine*, his *Fables*, and *Kindness in a Corner* filled me with admiration at the originality of thought, the understanding of human nature, and the dry humour of my hermit brother. At the end of last year a collection of his best short stories was

published under the title, *God's Eyes A-Twinkle*, with an admirable introduction by Charles Prentice.

One of the chief charms of his writing is its simplicity; you will never find a long sentence, or a long word; it is his natural writing, absolutely free from affectation and studied artistry.

And he has had his reward, not in large sums of money coming to him from his writings, for they are only for the few, but in the admiration and appreciation of those who have fallen under his spell. And this is proved by the fact that he has been awarded a Civil pension—an act of the Government which has always given me peculiar satisfaction.

John Cowper Powys (b. 1872) has given an introspective and full account of his childhood in his autobiography; and one is struck by the activity of his imagination, and by his consciousness that he possessed qualities of an unusual order.

At Dorchester he forced his personality upon his little world by organizing an army of which he was the general, by inventing games, by writing verse, by making up stories, and by writing and preaching sermons from which his brothers and sisters had no escape.

He was able to indulge these tendencies to his heart's content until the age of ten and a half, when he and I went to the Preparatory School at Sherborne. There, public opinion would have none of Powys major's fantasies, and they had to go underground for a time. But they did not die. From time to time through his school days and always in the holidays they would come to light again. And then when he left school and went to Cambridge he was able to give them free rein and could continue openly upon his magical quest in what was at one and the same time the real world and yet a world full of marvels.

At Sherborne School John was not happy. How could we expect it with a boy of his temperament, so sensitive, imaginative, and introspective and so full of his own importance? Such a boy could never find school life easy. And the fact that his arrival was heralded by the news, 'A poet is coming to the house next term,' was enough to brand him as an oddity, one whom ordinary boys could find amusement in harrying.

He went up to Cambridge with the idea of following the family tradition and being ordained. This had always been his mother's wish; she had liked to picture him being an immense power for good in the country through his remarkable gift of eloquence. But it was not to be; wide reading, an intensive study of philosophy and free thinking changed his mind.

After taking his degree in history, he spent years in lecturing, first in girls' schools in Sussex, then for the Oxford and Cambridge Extension, who later sent him to America. Here, after a time he left them and lectured on his own. This he did most successfully, travelling from one end of the United States to the other. In my visit to America last year, wherever I went, I found John Cowper was known.

He was a most brilliant lecturer; never a note of any kind in his hand, by the gift of sheer eloquence he held his audience under a sort of magnetic spell. On the dais he might well have repeated the saying of his childhood: 'I am the Lord of Hosts!' if by that he meant 'I am the Great One, the Lord of Words and of this Assembly!'

All my brothers were late in starting their careers as writers. John's first book was published in 1915 when he was forty-three. Theodore's first novel when he was forty-eight, and Llewelyn's first book of importance when he was thirty-nine. In John's case this was due to his professional career, which left him little time for writing; but both Theodore and Llewelyn were slow developers, and though the urge was there and much writing had been done, it was some time before they had sufficient confidence in themselves to offer their work to the public; and they both owed much to John for his advice and encouragement.

It is true that in 1896 and 1899 John published two volumes of poetry, *Odes and other poems*, and *Poems*. He writes critically of them himself, but they were full of promise and there was much real poetry in them.

Then for years his time was occupied with lecturing. Subsequently two further volumes of poetry were published in America: *Mandragora* in 1917 and *Samphire* in 1922.

However, it is for his philosophical books, those dealing with

literature, his amazing *Autobiography*, and his novels that he will be remembered. *The Meaning of Culture*, *The Defence of Sensuality*, *The Philosophy of Solitude*, and *The Art of Growing Old* have helped and inspired many a reader. In these books one feels that he cannot forget that before everything else he is a lecturer, and he drives his points home as if he were addressing an audience. The result is there are repetitions and, at times, he becomes somewhat verbose, but there are also passages of surpassing eloquence. His latest books are *Obstinate Cymric*, in which he makes it clear that he has no doubts as to his Welsh origin, and *Rabelais*, which has been well received.

His outstanding novels are: *A Glastonbury Romance*, *Wolf Solent*, and *Owen Glendower*. The natural background in these books is wonderfully drawn, and against this background the drama runs its course, alive with those countless rare and interesting characters which his imagination has created to let his readers see the strange workings of the human mind.

His writings are themselves a valuable contribution to the literature of the country; but it is not only by them and his lectures that he has made his influence felt. He has never failed to give help and encouragement to and to stir the imagination of all those he has met who have shown a zeal for writing; and not a few well-known authors and poets will acknowledge this.

Further, I know I am right in saying that it is chiefly due to his ever-ready sympathy and his inspiration that the Powys family has come to be known as a family of writers.

And I like to think of this old brother of mine, the closest of all my friends for more than seventy years, almost at the end of his magical quest on this earth, wandering in the early mornings, as he daily does, in all weathers over the Berwyn hills, the hills of his ancestors, and pausing before the rocks and stones, trees and streams, which he has dedicated to one or other of his many friends and relations, to offer prayers for their welfare.

D. H. Lawrence

WALTER ALLEN

D. H. LAWRENCE's death in 1930, at the age of forty-four, now seems symbolic, a turning-point. To the young men of the twenties he had been a hero, the eternal Shelleyan figure of revolt; but the undergraduates of the thirties read Marx. For ten years the general attitude to Lawrence has been one either of hostile reaction or of blank indifference. The frenzied outburst of hagiolatry on the part of often third-rate people who claimed to be his friends, an outburst parodied and put paid to by Thurber in his *My Memories of D. H. Lawrence*, did not help his reputation; of all the works on him that poured from the press in the early thirties Stephen Potter's *D. H. Lawrence: A First Study*, Horace Gregory's *The Pilgrim of Apocalypse*, and Huxley's introduction to the *Letters* alone have value as criticism now. He was read less and less, and, as is obvious from the embarrassed references towards him that one comes across from time to time, for those who have read him he has become an uncomfortable symbol of adolescent enthusiasms. Of his former fame little more remains than the general belief that he was obsessed by sex. And the prevailing ideologies have frowned on him: it seems that in some strange way he was a prophet of Nazism.

But after sixteen years it should be possible to see his work with some objectivity, and the experiment of re-reading him may be recommended. When one has said the worst—that he is not an artist in the sense that Joyce, who alone of his contemporaries was his peer as a writer, is, so that his work is sometimes formless and scrappy; that he succumbed too often to shrillness and a peeved bitterness and was sometimes conquered by his mannerisms—there remains the fact that he was a great and unique writer the best of whose writings is as fresh and new to-day as when it was written. Moreover, the course of events, the dominant belief in planned, scientific organization, has given what he has to say an added urgency.

A common view of Lawrence is that he was a great novelist *manqué*, that after *Sons and Lovers* he fell more and more into prophecy and a mystical dogma. But all the later Lawrence is implicit in his first three novels and his first book of poems. He was against his age; he loathed it; and if he had lived his loathing would no doubt have increased. From the beginning the tie that bound him to his age was that of opposition. The living writers who dominated young men during his adolescence were Shaw and Wells: in 1910 he writes from Croydon: 'I seem to have lost touch altogether with the old "progressive" clique . . . the Socialists are so stupid, and the Fabians so flat.' Two years later, he says in a letter: 'I have read *Anna of the Five Towns* to-day. . . . To be in Hanley, and to read almost my own dialect, makes me feel quite ill. . . . I hate Bennett's resignation. Tragedy ought really to be a great kick at misery. But *Anna of the Five Towns* seems like an acceptance—so does all the modern stuff since Flaubert. I hate it.' In relation to his period Lawrence was not unlike Blake with his 'Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau!' and it is worth remembering that if Blake had been born one hundred and fifty years later than he was, he no more than Lawrence could have escaped being caught up in the mechanism that hoisted the twentieth-century writer out of the working-class and set him down uneasily among the middle-class intelligentsia.

'Like any man possessed of great special talents,' says Aldous Huxley, he (Lawrence) was predestined by his gifts. Explanations of him in terms of a Freudian hypothesis of nurture may be interesting, but they do not explain. That Lawrence was profoundly affected by his love for his mother and by her excessive love for him, is obvious to anyone who has read *Sons and Lovers*. None the less it is, to me at any rate, almost equally obvious that even if his mother had died when he was a child, Lawrence would still have been, essentially and fundamentally, Lawrence.' It is worth saying, at a time when the reductive analysis of artists has become the rage. But, just as it is not irrelevant to a discussion of the material of Blake's art to remember that his father was a follower of Swedenborg, so there

are factors in the circumstances of Lawrence's early life that at any rate help to isolate the nature of his art. Lawrence's was a very English genius, and partly so because he had been brought up a nonconformist, in the tradition of religious dissent. A character in Joyce Cary's fine novel *To Be a Pilgrim* says: 'Edward used to say that the effect of a Protestant education was to make people a little mad. "It throws upon everyone the responsibility for the whole world's sins, and it doesn't provide any escape—not even a confession box."' Lawrence wasn't by any means mad, but his education was not merely protestant but nonconformist. He was himself aware of the strength of the nonconformist tradition within him—see his essay 'Hymns in a Man's Life'—and in *The Plumed Serpent* he was to write his own hymns. At his shrillest Lawrence often reminds one of a nonconformist local preacher; and Eliot was right to put him in his primer of modern heresy, for he had the nonconformist's besetting sin—the intransigence that impels a man to found his own religion—to the point of genius.

Then, he came from the working-class. Almost inevitably, he was class-conscious, for class-consciousness remains long after a man has climbed out of the class he was born into. It may not be apparent to other people; it may be merely a private unease; or it may be truculent and genial, as one suspects it is with some successful Labour leaders. But it may also be rancorous, full of the spleen and spite of an inferiority feeling masking itself as superiority, and this though the man is successful in the eyes of the world and his equals. Such rancorous class feeling is a form of hate. It is found at times in the writings of H. G. Wells—the quite irrational fury against Oxford, for instance. And it is common in much of Lawrence, in whose novels and stories working men and aristocrats may be praised but never the bourgeoisie. A recurring motive in his work is the conquest of the high-born lady by the man of plebeian origin; and Lawrence himself as a young man was na vely triumphant that he should have married a *baronin*. It is this rancour of class-consciousness that is responsible for so much of the unpleasant side of his genius, the hectoring, jeering, bullying note which he slips into

when imagination flags; it mounts, in *Pansies*, into the quite hysterical denunciation of the middle-class, the class that read his books. 'I don't feel it *here*,' he said, and pressed his two hands on his solar plexus: so he confuted Huxley's arguments in defence of Darwinism. Ultimately, all nonconformity begins with the 'I don't feel it *here*' and the hands pressed on the solar plexus. That is no criticism of nonconformity. But the nonconformist attitude combined with a rancorous class feeling can give rise to a nagging, intolerable note of moral superiority which sometimes makes Lawrence appear like a latter-day Carlyle.

But more important is the clash within him symbolized by the clash between his parents. His father was a miner, practically illiterate, non-intellectual, often drunk, but redeemed by an extraordinarily vivid apprehension of natural life and living; his mother was of a somewhat higher social class, spiritual, intellectual, refined, high-minded—'cut out,' as Lawrence was to write towards the end of his life, 'to play a superior role in the god-damned *bourgeoisie*.' The meeting between them is most beautifully described in the first chapter of *Sons and Lovers*. 'The dusky, golden softness of this man's sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame of a candle, not baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her.' But their marriage was unhappy, and something was killed in the father. The children were caught up in the clash and in *Sons and Lovers*, try to be fair as he may, Lawrence is on his mother's side.

But even at that time, and before, he was more his father's child than he knew.

The quick sparks on the gorse bushes are leaping
Little jets of sunlight texture imitating flame;
Above them, exultant, the peewits are sweeping:
They have triumphed again o'er the ages, their screamings proclaim.

Rabbits, handfuls of brown earth, lie
Low-rounded on the mournful turf they have bitten down to the quick.
Are they asleep? Are they living? Now see, when I
Lift my arms, the hill bursts and heaves under their spurting kick.

It is the earliest poem that Lawrence himself cared to preserve, written at the same time as the first drafts of *The White Peacock*, while a student at Nottingham University College. As verse it has obvious faults; but it remains of interest because of its delighted, immediate, non-intellectual response to the physical world. It was precisely this quality that distinguished and redeemed Lawrence's father. Lawrence himself was never, of course, as George Orwell has recently stated, a miner, but he had what one sees as a miner's response to the world of nature; as though he had emerged daily from the darkness of the pit and daily saw the world new-born. His early novels and poems are full of this delighted, naïve, lyrical vision.

But after *Sons and Lovers* the vision deepens and extends, though the first indication of that deeper vision may be seen even in *The White Peacock*. In that novel Lawrence circumvented the problem of his father by practically omitting him. Lawrence's spokesman, the 'I' of the novel, Cyril, is a young man of a middle-class family, and the father is scarcely in the picture at all: he dies, a bad lot who has deserted his wife, half-way through the book. Even so, it wasn't so easy for Lawrence to kill his father, because before the book is ended Cyril stands almost in the relation of a son to Annable, the gamekeeper, who 'was a man of one idea—that all civilization was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture.' He had been a clergyman, and the husband of a peer's daughter, who went 'souly' on him. '“A poet got hold of her, and she began to affect Burne-Jones—or Waterhouse—it was Waterhouse—she was a lot like one of his women—Lady of Shalott, I believe.”' And the white peacock of the title, fouling the tombstones in the abandoned churchyard, is, says Annable, 'the very soul of a lady . . . a woman to the end, I tell you, all vanity and screech and defilement'; in other words, the agent of destruction, as she was to remain for Lawrence for many years. In *The White Peacock* Annable has been defeated by the high-born lady. Nearly twenty years later he was to get his own back on her, as Mellors, the gamekeeper of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. But the situation—the destruction of the instinctive man by the spiritual woman—is

archetypal for Lawrence, and Annable's peeress-wife becomes Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*, Hermione Roddice in *Women in Love*, Aaron's wife in *Aaron's Rod*; while the theme is also treated at great length and in detail in the sequence of autobiographical poems *Look, We Have Come Through!*

Annable is, of course, a highly sophisticated version of his father; a Morel who has become conscious. Lawrence was anti-intellectual, but if he was to communicate his vision at all he had to intellectualize his anti-intellectuality. For it *was* a vision. He expressed it negatively in his essay on Poe in *Studies in Classic North American Literature*: 'These terribly conscious birds, like Poe and his Ligeia, deny the very life that is in them; they want to turn it all into talk, into knowing. And so life, which will *not* be known, leaves them.' Life, which will *not* be known: the concept is fundamental to Lawrence. In his *The Strange Glory*, L. H. Myers makes his mystic Wentworth describe the mystical experience in these words: 'There is no illusory sense of understanding—only the profound realization that Mystery *is*.' Lawrence, too, was a mystic of a kind, and for him also the great fact of existence was that mystery *is*. The mystery was not to be apprehended or explained in terms of reason and logic—that was the way to kill it; Keats, it will be remembered, thought the same: 'Philosophy will clip an angel's wings.' It could be experienced, transmitted only by touch, direct intuition. The value of people, for Lawrence, consisted entirely in how far they were conscious of mystery, how far mystery resided in them. And since the analysing, scientific intellect killed the mystery, it obviously flourished most vigorously just where the analysing scientific intellect was least powerful, on the instinctual level, in sexual relationships, in the impulsive life of animals and nature, in the experience of death.

This vision explains both his own peculiar methods of character-creation and his years of wandering over the earth, from Nottingham to Mexico, via Germany, Italy, Ceylon, Australia, America, and back again to Italy. There is a passage in Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps* that throws much light on Lawrence: 'It (Liberia) seemed to satisfy, temporarily,

the sense of nostalgia for something lost; it seemed to represent a stage further back.' Again, 'When one sees to what unhappiness, to what peril of extinction, centuries of cerebration have brought us, one sometimes has a curiosity to discover if one can from what we have come, to recall at which point we went astray.' Lawrence was possessed of more than a 'nostalgia,' had something deeper than a 'curiosity.' He was, of course, a man of great intellectual capacity in the ordinary sense, 'a great passer of examination'; he also had to an extraordinary degree the faculty of what Jung calls primitive thinking and feeling. 'The ancients,' Jung has said, 'had, if one may so express it, an almost exclusively biological appreciation of their fellow-men'; which is very much the kind of appreciation Lawrence was continually seeking. This primitivism enabled him to explore, as no one else has done in modern literature, what are relatively 'unknown modes of being,' relatively because they have also been to some extent mapped out scientifically by the researches of Jung and anthropologists like Lévy-Bruhl.

To express these unknown—better, unconscious—modes of being in fiction Lawrence had to dispense with character as it is generally conceived. Character-creation is a convention. The majority of novelists tend to draw characters from the outside, almost as though describing the behaviour of actors on a stage: we deduce emotion from gesture. But Lawrence's problem was to express emotions, feelings, as they exist beneath the surface of gesture. He cannot do without gesture altogether, of course, but a simple instance of his method may be seen in his description of the pocket-picking in *Aaron's Rod*: 'As he was going home, suddenly, just as he was passing the Bargello, he stopped. He stopped, and put his hand to his breast-pocket. His letter-case was gone. He had been robbed. It was as if lightning ran through him at that moment, as if a fluid electricity rushed down his limbs, through the sluice of his knees, and out of his feet, leaving him standing there almost unconscious. For a moment unconscious and superconscious he stood there. He had been robbed. They had put their hand in his breast and robbed him.'

Lawrence could create character in the normal convention

perfectly well when he wanted to, but after *Sons and Lovers* such characters, except for Hermione Roddice in *Women in Love*, are minor characters. He was early attacked for his departure from the convention, and he defends himself at length—he is writing *The Rainbow* at the time—in a letter to Edward Garnett:

I have a different attitude to my characters . . . I don't care so much about what the woman feels. . . . That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care for what the woman *is*. . . . You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover—states of the same single radically unchanged element. (Like as diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon. The ordinary novelist would trace the history of the diamond—but I say, 'Diamond, what! This is carbon!' And my diamond might be coal or soot, and my theme is carbon.)

What interests him in his characters, then, is not the social man, the differentiated individual, but the seven-eighths of the iceberg of personality that is submerged and never seen, the unconscious mind, to which he preaches something like passivity on the part of the conscious. This accounts for the difficulty so many people find when first reading Lawrence. His convention has to be accepted, just as the conventions of any artist must be, if you are to read him with pleasure and profit. It accounts, too, for so many mannerisms of style that are usually considered blemishes: a Lawrence character 'dies,' 'swoons,' is 'fused into a hard bead,' 'lacerated,' 'made perfect,' time and time again. He is, if you like, fumbling for words, words with which to describe the strictly indescribable. Yet the language he uses is true to the rhythm of the life of the unconscious.

Because he is describing character at the unconscious level, at the depths and in the darkness, it is often extraordinarily difficult to know what his novels, *The Rainbow*, for instance, or *Women in Love*, are about in detail. Horace Gregory and Stephen Potter, both excellent critics who have studied Lawrence with sensitivity and discrimination, produce entirely opposed estimates of the

character of Ursula, in *The Rainbow*. The difficulty is, of course, that we know, or think we know, so much about the psychology of human beings; we make no such claims to know the psychology of fishes, humming birds, tortoises and kangaroos, and so Lawrence often appears to be much more successful—at any rate, acceptable—when he is re-creating the lives of birds, beasts and flowers. But if there is anything to the findings of depth psychology, then we must accept as legitimate the territory Lawrence chose for himself and expect future novelists to explore it further. Any such exploration must be through the symbol, for the unconscious, as unconscious, is by definition unknowable. And Lawrence is a master of the symbol in the psychological sense. 'A conception,' says Jung, 'which interprets the symbolic expression as the best possible formulation of a relatively unknown thing which cannot conceivably, therefore, be more clearly or characteristically represented is symbolic. . . . In so far as a symbol is a living thing, it is the expression of a thing not to be characterized in any other or better way. The symbol is alive in so far as it is pregnant with meaning.' An example of Lawrence's use of the symbol is the scene in the final chapter of *The Rainbow*, in which Ursula encounters the horses on the common. Have the horses an objective existence? Are they simply a projection of the unconscious? The passage cannot be reduced to any one prose meaning; it is 'the formulation of a relatively unknown thing' and, incidentally, a meaning is not to be found in it by trying to interpret the horses according to the usual terms of psycho-analysis or analytic psychology. Symbolism of this kind—in fiction it is seen at its most extensive and impressive perhaps in *Moby Dick*—is the rarest kind of artistic creation, and it is everywhere in Lawrence, though at its most successful probably in his short stories, in *The Fox*, for instance, where the story consists wholly of the working out of one symbol.

Lawrence's use of the symbol explains also his failures, *The Plumed Serpent*, for instance, which is a brilliant fabrication, as may be seen if the figure of Quexalcoatl is compared with the African carving described in *Women in Love*, of 'a woman sitting

naked in a strange posture, and looking tortured, her abdomen stuck out,' a true symbol for a way of life which can never be completely apprehended.

It is plain now that Lawrence's wanderings over the earth were not escapism in any ordinary sense, nor were they the result of pique at persecution. Given the man, the attempt to find a scene and a people where knowledge was intuitional and the symbol its living expression was inevitable. Lawrence as Lawrence was quite simply frustrated, and bound to be frustrated, in modern industrial society. *The Plumed Serpent* may be considered as a last despairing attempt to will the kind of life he wanted into existence. It failed, as it had to. It is from the evidence of *The Plumed Serpent*, one imagines, that the charges that Lawrence was a precursor of Nazism arise. But Nazi Germany was exactly the highly industrialized, scientifically planned and controlled state that Lawrence most passionately hated, and it is relevant here to remark that he saw through Germany as early as 1924.

And in the end he did find the scene and the people he was looking for; in the past; among the ancient Etruscans. Their way of life—I do not at all know whether Lawrence's interpretation of it is accepted by historians—he describes in one of the most brilliant and most moving of his travel books, *Etruscan Places*. He writes:

The tombs seem so easy and friendly, cut out of the rock underneath. One does not feel oppressed, descending into them. . . . There is a simplicity, combined with a most peculiar, free-breasted naturalness and spontaneity, in the shapes and movements of the underworld walls and spaces, that at once reassures the spirit. The Greeks sought to make an impression, and Gothic seeks still more to impress the mind. The Etruscans, no. The things they did, in their easy centuries, are as natural and easy as breathing.

They leave the breast breathing pleasantly, with a certain fullness of life. . . . And that is the true Etruscan quality: ease, naturalness, and an abundance of life, no need to force the mind or the soul in any direction.

And death, to the Etruscans, was a pleasant continuance of life, with jewels and wine and flutes playing for the dance. It was neither an

ecstasy of bliss, a heaven, nor a purgatory of torment. It was just a natural continuance of the fullness of life. Everything was in terms of life, of living.

Etruscan Places, *Apocalypse*, and the handful of poems published as *Last Poems* contain the quintessence of Lawrence. Posthumous works, they are still comparatively little known; they appeared after Potter and Gregory had written their critical essays. Which is a pity, for they show, not a new Lawrence, but a Lawrence whose genius was deepening right up to the moment of death. They are different from all the work that had gone before because of the serenity of their mood and the nobility and grandeur of their style. There is no more jeering, no more rancour; the fretting has gone. In poems like 'The Ship of Death' and 'Shadows' he achieved an unflawed purity of utterance unrivalled in the poetry of our time.

W. H. Auden

G. S. FRASER

'WITH his unattractive stock-in-trade, and his clap-trap,' says Kathleen Raine, 'Auden, nevertheless, as none of the rest do, touches the human heart.' The unattractive stock-in-trade is, I suspect, for Miss Raine the facile use of generalizations—the taking of a leading idea from Freud, from Marx, and now from Kierkegaard, and seeing how it works out in a different context. It is the adoption, by a powerful but not a very scrupulous intellect, of any convenient 'working scheme.' (The first section of 'The Orators,' with its startling application of Dante's ideas about love, as the only human motive, to the problems of public school life is an admirable example of Auden's pragmatism at its most fruitful and illuminating level.) God, like the libido, or like the dialectic, is for Auden chiefly a useful generalization; assuming the existence of God, he finds it possible to solve

certain problems. The clap-trap is the unction, the over-persuasiveness, the mixture of blarney and bullying that goes with this sort of pragmatism. Hugh Sykes Davies, an excellent critic, who writes too little, has hinted at the morally repellent side of Auden's attitudes . . . the element that has something in common even with Buchmanism. 'It is not possible,' Sykes Davies says, 'to adopt a new theory or a new loyalty overnight for valid reasons, and the reasons for such overnight changes are always invalid. The crisis in the patient's ideas and feelings does not arise from observation and speculation, but from internal psychological problems, of course unperceived; and the solution is determined not by observation and speculation, but by the needs of the psychological condition . . . Every convert is psychologically ill . . . Morally, he disgusts because the act of conversion solidifies personal neuroses into social form. *In time, converts band together in such numbers that they, the diseased, can interfere with the healthy unconverted—and they are always anxious to do this.*' It must be admitted that it is almost too easy to apply this generalization to Auden. He has, since he began, been threatening his readers with a variety of calamities—disease, madness, death in war or revolution, and now eternal damnation. He has, as he admits himself,

adopted what I should disown
The preacher's loose, immodest tone.

Yet, when all this is said, Auden does remain the most considerable poet of his generation. He does, as Miss Raine says, touch the human heart. He cannot be dismissed just by saying that one doesn't believe what he says, and doubts (because he is too emphatic about it) whether he really believes it himself. Auden's attitudes, reduced to average prose, would result in a writer as unpleasant as, say, Mr. Middleton Murry. But they are not reduced to average prose. They are *used* for rather extraordinary poetry.

Let us take an example of the clap-trap—the gift for sinisterly effective Kiplingesque slogans. 'We must love one another or die.' Has anybody thought of a more nasty and horrid motive

for our loving one another? (Just what would a love vamped up on such prudential considerations be really worth?) But it has its effectiveness as a slogan, as *telling* clap-trap, just because it leaves to the reader the choice of the level at which he wishes to interpret it. There is the level of mere platitude: 'Isolated people wither away.' There is a level of frightful cynicism: 'Though all my impulses are selfish, I need other people as a source of new energy.' 'I am so lonely, that I must love you, though there is nothing in you to love.' There is the level of fear: 'I had better love you, for otherwise you may kill me.' There is even an honest level, as in Christ's answer to the rich young man who asked what should he do to inherit eternal life. 'I admit that to try to love everybody, in a quite indiscriminating way, is a terrible strain and a sacrifice. But you are not forced to. You can always die . . . the more usual, and perhaps the more dignified choice.' But the total effect of such slogans is *mainly* frightening, revealing a ghastly hollowness, but putting up a sort of façade in front of it, or suggesting a cheap way out . . .

What touches the human heart is certainly not Auden's solutions (which are other people's solutions, ready-made solutions, taken over) but the situation in which Auden, and most of us, more often than we care to admit, find ourselves: that of complete isolation. Isolation is the disease and Love, however much he cheapens the word, can still remain the word that suggests a remedy:

Released by Love from isolating wrong
Let us for Love unite our various song,
Each with his gift according to his kind
Bringing this child his body and his mind.

That is from 'For the Time Being,' and, according to the Christian framework of this oratorio, Love in the first line would mean charity, in the wide sense, and Love in the second God, or more precisely the Christ-child; but the effectiveness of the passage is partly due to the fact that, owing to the vague echo of the Counter-Reformation—the note of Dryden and Purcell—in the style, we *also* think of sexual love in the first line and of

Cupid in the second. Thus to 'bring this child my body,' while it *ostensibly* means to bring the Christ-child a body dedicated to chastity, *also* suggests bringing Cupid a body dedicated to pleasure; this faint and trembling ambiguity creates more effective poetry than a merely Christian, or a merely pagan statement possibly could. We are aware of the death from which Auden's Love ('Winter and Love,' says a more subtle poet, 'are desperate medicines') is an escape; we forgive him a great deal because we, too, are aware of the 'isolating wrong.' Admittedly, Auden's escape has never been into personal love in the ordinary sense; rather into something larger and vaguer and more full of energy than the ordinary human situation—the dialectic (loss of oneself in history), the libido (loss of oneself in sexual ecstasy), and now God (surrender of one's will to another much more powerful one). He has been seeking situations less painful and complicated, with less of a prosaic drag about them, than this. His success as a poet, perhaps, is his failure to remain satisfied with his escapes. The pathos, what touches the human heart, is that after all these efforts the great waves move away, and the poet is as much alone as ever, lying awake in bed and regarding the other body

mortal, guilty, but to me
The entirely beautiful.

Something like this perhaps is true—whether wholly intended by Auden or not—about Auden's Prospero, a Gerald Heard type, in 'The Mirror and the Sea.' That he quite fails (as Antonio maliciously suggests) to break his wand. There is an obvious comparison. Shakespeare was not intensely or especially a religious writer, yet in that conventional little epilogue to 'The Tempest,' with, as Walter de la Mare says, 'its curiously apt overtones,'

now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults. . . .

in that, we feel a consciousness of the 'last things' so habitual that it does not need, so to say, to write itself up.

Auden's Prospero, on the other hand, in what might be an expansion of this passage, writes himself up to some tune.

When the servants settle me into a chair
In some well arranged corner of the garden,
And arrange my mufflers and rugs, shall I ever be able
To stop myself from telling them what I am doing—
Sailing alone, out over seventy fathoms?
Yet if I speak, I shall sink without a sound
Into unmeaning abysses. *Can I learn to suffer*
Without saying something ironic or funny
About suffering?

I would say, no: the old gentleman will be talking . . . (In passing, these three lines I have italicized show one weakness in the style of this volume—an excessive bookishness. They are like bad Aldous Huxley. They irritate because Auden's Prospero has given no evidence, sententious, loquacious, and sometimes eloquent as he is, that he is at all capable of thinking of anything very effectively ironic or funny to say; and people may be irritated, too, at the notion of suffering as a rather expensive and special luxury for the truly high-minded.)

But one sees the differences. Shakespeare is a dramatist but his people are not, in quite this sense, incessantly dramatizing themselves. For Auden the dramatic gesture (not the dramatic incident) is all important. Everything he would do would be this special sort of thing, with its sharp rhetorical edge to it—'Leave for Cape Wrath to-night!' or, 'Sailing alone, out over seventy fathoms.' Yet ordinary common little people pray and repent, and feel the emptiness of their small successes, just as they work for a political party, or go to bed with their wives; it was not, after all, Auden who invented religion or sex or politics. Like Miranda, Auden finds novelty everywhere and everywhere assimilates it; as with her brave new world, 'tis new to *him*. This is part of what Miss Riding and Mr. Graves meant by calling him a synthetic, not a traditional, writer. Everything has

to be questioned, everything explained. This partly explains the queer and rather unfeeling detachment Mr. Spender has noted: for Auden's Prospero,

A stranger's quiet collapse in a noisy street
Is the beginning of much lively speculation,

not the beginning of doing anything practical for the stranger.

That everything is seen from the outside, and as new, and as having to be explained (that is, as having to be set against a wider background, which is assumed, so that there may be explanations) is one reason, perhaps, for certain faults of taste and feeling which are rather noticeable in this new volume. He ignores the fact that lives of ordinary routine, which look dull and simple from the outside, from the inside, broken down into their day to day detail, may seem interesting and complicated enough. And this causes him occasionally to indulge in a peculiarly unpleasant mixture of spiritual and social snobbery:

The solitude familiar to the poor
Is feeling that the family next door
The way it talks, eats, dresses, loves, and hates
Is indistinguishable from one's own.

Both the facts, and the values implied here, seem to me wrong. It is the upper classes in all ages, who have tended to conventionalize their behaviour; Goldsmith somewhere has an acute remark about the manners of the gentry being the same all over eighteenth-century Europe—one must look both for national characteristics, and individual eccentricities, among the peasantry. I am sure, I am much more *like* any other middle-class intellectual of my age, than a plumber in Bradford is like a plumber in London. Secondly, I do not see what is wrong with the family next door being like my family. Real conversation, real intimacy, is, in fact, only possible when two people share a general background of behaviour, and indeed of reading, and of taste, which is so much taken for granted that it need not be talked about. The individualism which Auden *seems* to be advocating here is rather like that which, along so many English streets, jostles

together the fake-Tudor or neo-lavatorial pub, the commercial Renaissance bank, and the jazz-modernistic cinema. I prefer the amenity of the Georgian crescent. An even more snobbish (and very badly written) passage is this

Redeem for the dull the
Average Way
That common ungifted
Natures may
Believe that their normal
Vision can
Walk to perfection.

It is not really such a colossal and crushing tragedy not to be Mr. Auden; and the best of us are very common and ungifted, in very many directions, and the most limited of us is capable of sacrifice and of love.

This stuffiness is all the more depressing when one remembers Auden's former gift, in a poem like 'August for people and their favourite islands,' of summing up, quite easily and lazily, the whole atmosphere of a place and the people there; and he seems to have lost that, and to have lost the unaffected pleasure he once felt in the sight of people being easily and lazily themselves; America could have offered him Coney Island, instead of these depressing and unconvincing generalizations, but the American scene, the American atmosphere, the speech habits of America, appear not to exist for him. I think there is a reason, a sociological one. The façade of English life is a very composed one, the flaws in the surface are difficult to detect, and one of the things that made Auden before the war a poet of such extreme social significance was his ability to put a finger on points of extreme, but hidden, stress. But America does not present a composed façade; it makes a cult, almost, of the incongruous; it is almost blind to the incongruous; and American writers tend, like Henry Adams, or the Southern Regionalists, either to invent a manner adapted to a composed society which doesn't exist, but ought to, or like Sinclair Lewis, in his earlier and less regrettable days, to shout at the top of their voices to draw attention to incongruities which,

even for the least sensitive English observer, would be glaring enough. A writer like Auden for instance, or like Rex Warner, might do a fruitful parody of a leader in *The Times*, the *Economist*, or the *Spectator*; but a leader in the *Saturday Evening Post* parodies itself. There is a degree of rusticity which exhausts the resources of language. In America, I suppose, there are only three alternatives; one surrenders, one becomes hysterical and hoarse like Mark Twain or Sinclair Lewis, or one withdraws. Auden seems to have withdrawn, and America, for all it exists for him, might be a desert island. There is only one outbreak of the old beautiful malice and mischief, a poem which I first read in a scribbled copy over a bar in Cairo:

In the Retreat from Reason he deserted on his rocking horse
And lived on a fairy's kindness till he tired of kicking her,
He smashed her spectacles and stole her cheque-book and
mackintosh
Then cruised his way back to the Army.

*George, you old numero,
How did you get in the Army?*

That is nicely done. But, on the whole, and at least for the time being, Auden seems to have lost that promise he had once of being our best poet in a conversational style (that is, our best poet with an adult social sense) since the Byron of 'Don Juan' or perhaps even since Pope.

On the other hand, Auden is steadily increasing his mastery over the actual craft of verse. There is almost no form, no metre at which he is not capable of having a pretty competent try. His most interesting metrical innovation in this volume is the borrowing of syllabic metre from Miss Marianne Moore. He uses this in what is perhaps his most perfect single poem to date, 'Alonso to Ferdinand.' Each line has exactly nine syllables, the stanzas have an elaborate and difficult rhyme scheme, but since stressed can rhyme with unstressed syllables the number of possible full rhymes in English is greatly extended; the general effect of the metre, in Auden's use of it, is to give an effect of

careful but successful concentration, like a military slow march with the soldiers counting their steps, or like counting your steps when you are dancing a slow waltz. His use of the metre is quite unlike Miss Moore's, who always has the air of balancing say, a pile of plates which are always about to topple over but never quite do; the air of doing something surprising, difficult, acrobatic, sometimes almost (elegantly) clownish . . . indulging, as she does, in lines of varying length and slyly concealed rhyme patterns. Auden's use of the metre is more straightforward, his effect smooth, grave, and majestic. I think syllabic metre is a very important and useful innovation in English verse . . . much more so, for instance, than Hopkins' type of metre, which tends to distort the natural syntax and cadence of the English language, and can only be used effectively, indeed, in Hopkins' own peculiar type of rhetoric. It would be a mistake, of course, to attempt to read 'Alonso to Ferdinand' without any stresses at all; what the reader will find himself stressing is what the French call the 'mobile accent' . . . or those words on which, from the sense pattern (of the individual line, not of the sentence or paragraph) there is a natural rhetorical stress. That stress, however, will be a modulated one, so as not to rack the slow and grave syllabic pattern.

With this advance in metrical accomplishment there goes, however, that tendency towards an impressive vagueness, even towards a triteness or woolliness, of metaphor and simile first noticed by Julian Symons. The contrast with the tightness of Auden's earliest poems is striking and from some points of view depressing. 'My dear one is mine as mirrors are lonely.' That, as reviewer after reviewer has pointed out, is a very lovely line. But just how does my dear one being mine resemble mirrors being lonely? (To anybody with some knowledge of how poems are composed, it must seem possible that Auden may have written first, 'My dear one is mine *though* mirrors are lonely,' and then, by the alteration of a syllable, created at once a more euphonious and a more mysterious line.) It might be a mere comparison of degree: mirrors are so lonely that they reflect everything which is in front of them, and my dear one just as

completely reflects me (or I may be, indeed, comparing myself to the mirror; I am as lonely for my dear one as a mirror is for everything, and for me there is nothing else, my dear one is everything). That is enough to satisfy the syntax, but the sadness and the beauty of the line come partly, I think, from the fact that mirrors are so obvious a symbol both of understanding and separation; I am reflected completely in the mirror, but I also, my real self, remain completely outside the mirror; or, in love with you, I reflect you completely, but you are free, as a person, to move away, while I still possess—for a little time—your image. And if *both* you and I are like mirrors, we only know each other as reflected in each other, and being in love is important as a way of possessing oneself. But this possession is illusory, for the surface never melts away, never quite dissolves even in love, and we can never, like Alice, enter the looking-glass kingdom, and wander together there, hand in hand. All these ideas are more or less relevant, and there are probably others I have missed. The point is that one can't, of course, stop to work them all out while actually reading the poem. One has the impression, merely, of something moving, intricate, and perhaps true, and passes on. This intricate vagueness has its own fascination and I cannot agree with Mr. Symons in regarding it as mere laziness on Auden's part. He knows very well, I should think, its peculiar effectiveness.

I have been delaying coming to grips with Auden's thought. William Empson has a striking little poem, 'Reflection from Rochester,' in which he says that the mind

now less easily decides
On a good root confusion to amass
Much safety from irrelevant despair.
Mere change in numbers made the process crass.

Auden is not a thinker in the sense that Empson is; but what he has really been doing all along is seeking, in politics, or psychology, or religion, for a good root-confusion which would make the despair (which is, I think, his centrally important experience) irrelevant. Partly for that reason his politics, his

psychology, and now his religion are always off-centre. And they are, in fact, confusing. They are ways both of explaining and of attempting to get rid of—but also to infect others with a personal sense of guilt. He does seek in that sense, in Sykes Davies' phrase, to solidify personal neuroses. The particular type of religious thinking to be found in 'For the Time Being' is not new in his work. It is to be found in the famous poem that begins,

Sir, no man's enemy, forgiving all
But will, his negative inversion, be prodigal. . . .

and that ends with the rather undergraduate line,

New styles of architecture, a change of heart.

It is a religion of emotional conversion, and, among historical forms of Christianity, it resembles Lutheranism more than either Roman Catholicism or High Calvinism. It makes much more of God's will and less of his reason, much more of the individual's direct response to God and less of the idea of fellowship in a Church, than Roman Catholicism, but it does allow some scope for man's emotions (if not for his reasonable will) to co-operate with God, and it does not go all the way with that type of extreme Protestantism which makes man's salvation or damnation *entirely* dependent upon God's particular election. The general effect of such a religion would be to make men feel that, whether or not necessarily wicked, they are certainly weak, and that perhaps it is better to sin strongly and to repent strongly than to be puffed up with a sense of one's strength and virtue. (Herod, the good administrator, in Auden's oratorio, is the man who tries to rely on his own will and reasoned moral standards; he is rather venomously treated. Caesar, in another poem, stands for all man's attempts to stand on his own feet—in science, in culture, in philosophy, as well as in politics—and it is made clear that from Auden's standpoint all these are equally wicked and disastrous.) The dangers of this particular type of religion, with its emphasis on some sort of emotional surrender, are seen more

clearly in 'The Mirror and the Sea.' Antonio's great crime is that he has not surrendered to Prospero,

Your all is partial, Prospero;
 My will is all my own:
 Your need to love shall never know
 Me: I am I, Antonio:
 My choice myself alone.

But if Prospero can be a symbol for God, he might also be a symbol for Hitler. No man has the right to compel another man's love, unless he can prove himself worthy of it; no God either, for that matter, unless he can prove that, as well as being powerful, he is good. 'God is not without sin. He created the world,' says an old proverb from the East, and it is not very noble to worship a God just because he is powerful and can harm us. Auden, indeed, does show that he is aware of this dilemma:

Alone, alone, about a dreadful wood
 Of conscious evil runs a lost mankind,
 Dreading to find its Father lest it find
 The Goodness it has dreaded is not good . . .

but his solution is Kierkegaard's, that of the emotional leap in the dark, not Milton's, that of justifying the ways of God to man. We have seen some of the results of the emotional leap in the dark in politics (and German politics have suffered greatly from the tradition of passive obedience that goes with Lutheran pietism) and German politics, when Hitler played Prospero, suffered greatly from the lack of a few Antonios. Auden has perhaps found a temporary solution for a number of his own personal difficulties, but I do not think that he has lighted on a very useful root-confusion for the rest of us. He seems to me, on the whole, to be *less* illuminating than in the days of his psychological and political probings.

He is not, I think, fundamentally a religious poet, any more than, for example, Milton was.¹ A person with the genuine piety,

¹ I hope this doesn't sound too paradoxical. The distinction is between grasping a theology as a coherent parable, or a coherent system of ideas,

the sense of mystery and awe, of, say, Dr. Johnson could never have made out of the truths of the Christian religion the purely mythological pattern—the argumentative deity and the canonading angels of ‘Paradise Lost.’ The artist and the dialectician were strong enough in Milton to make use of this dangerous material and the artist and the dialectician are strong enough in Auden. But I find no evidence anywhere in this book of Auden’s, any more than anywhere in Milton, of any profound *personal* spiritual experience; such as one finds, for instance, in Mr. David Gascoyne’s ‘Noctambules’ or in some short poems of Miss Kathleen Raine’s. He is not a religious poet in that sense, and though ‘For the Time Being’ has some affinities with ‘The Rock,’ I do not see Auden going on to write something like ‘Four Quartets.’ His gifts are of another sort, and his strength is of another sort. Antonio’s mockery is true,

Antonio, sweet brother, has to laugh.
How easy you have made it to refuse
Peace to your greatness! Break your wand in half,
The fragments will join: burn your books or lose
Them in the sea, they will soon reappear
Not even damaged: as long as I choose
To wear my fashion, whatever you wear
Is a magic robe . . .

We can allow no peace to Auden’s greatness. He will not be satisfied until he has written something which is utterly moving, persuading, convincing to *everybody*, and, of course, he will never do this. There will always be the schoolboy who doesn’t attend,

which is what Milton and Auden do, and having a certain kind of personal experience, a sharp and immediate sense of goodness or of evil. Or perhaps it might be described as the difference between generalized and personal experience, between accepting a set of ideas because on the whole they seem to fit, and being absolutely gripped and held by a certain sort of experience. Neither Auden nor Milton seem to be gripped and held. They choose, rather, to grip and hold. They could let go.

Because they could let go, poets like Auden and Milton are more anxious to persuade than poets, like Herbert, or Vaughan, or Crashaw, of actual religious experience. One does not need to argue about actual experience. One has had it, and can merely attempt to record it.

the scout who skips the parade, the man who chooses dying instead of loving, the heckler with the awkward question, the fellow conjurer chiefly interested in how he does the trick—there will always be Antonio. Prospero, again and again, will have to postpone the breaking of his wand. But, after all, is it to be regretted? There are so many professional mystagogues; so many dull preachers; so many cheapjacks with their bottled spiritual cure-alls; but of all poets writing to-day, there is only Auden with just that range and scope. His strength is not in what he accepts, but in what he discards. It lies just as much in a certain fundamental ruthlessness as in the love about which he talks so vaguely and so much. He is a much greater man than his ideas; as a poet, a major voice; as a thinker, about on the level of Mr. Middleton Murry. Because he has a major voice, what he says will always be relevant, without having to be, in a sense, true. (In one sense, it always will be true; it will always be a possible synthesis of an unusually wide reading and experience—it will always be pragmatically true, a possible 'working scheme.') 'All I have is a voice . . .' It is for that, in this volume, that we must feel gratitude; and it is in that, for the future, that we must feel hope.

Joyce Cary

PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON

JOYCE CARY was born in 1888. He wrote his first novel, *Aissa Saved*, when he was forty-two years old and had retired for reasons of health from his job as a political officer in Central Africa. *Aissa Saved*, a violent and uneasy story of the havoc the Christian missionary can cause in a primitive population, would entirely have satisfied the average first novelist with his achievement. The humour was in the grand, rough, sardonic line of Anglo-Saxon fun from Fielding to Joyce; the action had a

bloodthirsty gorgeousness beside which the action of *Salammbô* seemed to take upon itself a static pageantry; and the insight into the mind of the African native had a depth and a clarity altogether unique. This first novel was entirely mature. Cary had made certain that it should be, before he would allow its publication. (He emphasizes, by the way, that *Aïssa* was not meant as a reflection upon the Church or the missionaries, whom he considers, on balance, to have been a blessing to Africa. His intention was to show the native mind at work upon the new ideas with which it had been indoctrinated. 'Every religion, every belief, does evil as well as good; like Rose—the dominant character in *The Moonlight*—it takes the responsibility and does its best.')

The author was born in County Donegal, into a Devonshire family settled there since 1612. George Cary, his first ancestor in Ireland, was Member of Parliament for Derry in 1613. Castle Cary, in Donegal, was his grandfather's home, and was sold after the land war in the 'eighties; but the Cary family were resident landlords, and only this year Joyce Cary was asked to return to Ireland.

'Joyce' was his mother's surname. He was educated at Clifton and at Trinity, Oxford, and studied art in Edinburgh and Paris. He went out to the Near East and joined a Montenegrin battalion for the war of 1912-13, but was then attached to a British Red Cross party under Captain Martin Leake, V.C., who took him to the front. Afterwards he studied Irish co-operation under Sir Horace Plunkett and in 1913 joined the Nigerian political service. He fought in a Nigerian regiment during the first world war, and was wounded. As a magistrate and executive officer he was sent to Borgu, a very remote and primitive district, where he was able to study native life at close quarters. When his health, which had never recovered from war service, failed him, he retired from Africa and began to write. His wife is Gertrude Ogilvie. He has four sons; three have served in the recent war and the fourth, then at school, is now at Cambridge.

When Cary entered the profession of letters, he did so with a kind of dedicated determination; he knew his own powers, and

knew his capacity to expand them. His purpose was entirely serious.

It may seem superfluous to remark that this was so. It would be, if we did not live in an age of literary mass-production, wherein three-quarters of the novels that come from the presses have been written for no better reason than to provide a little brief entertainment for the reader, or a helping of Hollywood gold for the author. The fact which, above all, is lowering the standard of the English novel is lack of ambition. How many novelists to-day write in the conscious and soberminded *endeavour* to produce a book in the world-class, worthy to stand in the great line of English literature?

Cary's natural qualities are great. He has a prose-style of abnormal vigour and lustre, a visual sense that fills his pages with strong light and colour and adorns them with sudden, unexpected 'stills' flawless in their shapeliness and taste. He has a rich humour, sometimes ironic and subtle, and at other times in the 'thick-ear' tradition of English clowning. He preserves in unusual keenness the memories of a privileged and enchanted childhood, glossed over with the winter sparkle and with the hazes of autumn and high summer; and he is able to see things now as he saw them through childish eyes, selecting the moments of glory and terror from his youth with a child's arbitrary selection. He is profoundly fascinated by people. He loves people, and so is able to write from within his characters. His experience has been wide and varied, and he draws upon it freely.

His progress as a novelist seems to me to fall distinctly into two parts: the novels of personal experience, and the novels of the imagination. In the first cycle are the African stories, *Aissa Saved*, *The African Witch*, *Mister Johnson*, and the memories of childhood, *Castle Corner* and *A House of Children*. (*Charley is My Darling*, a study of juvenile delinquency, lies outside the other childhood stories, as it is a work of observation rather than of memory.) In the second cycle is the remarkable series of three books, *Herself Surprised*, *To Be a Pilgrim*, and *The Horse's Mouth*, and his most recent novel, *The Moonlight*.

Now the first group of novels are drawn almost entirely out

off personal experience. To my mind, the gulf between *A House of Children* and *Herself Surprised* results from an entire change-over of the source of supply. *Herself Surprised* and the novels that succeed it are works of the imagination. They are the histrionic books. In them the author is not speaking for himself, but through the minds and mouths of his characters. He is no longer the child 'Evelyn,' of *A House of Children*, no longer the political officer translating as purely and as accurately as humanly possible the minds of the native peoples for whom he greatly cares and whom he profoundly understands. Now he is Sara, the amoral, roseate and adorable cook, he is Mr. Wilcher, most understandably driven to whispering improprieties into the ears of young girls in Hyde Park, he is Gulley Jimson, the great and disreputable painter with one foot on Parnassus and the other in Wormwood Scrubs. He is writing now from *within*, sinking his own personality entirely into the personality of his characters.

In a letter he comments—'The jump between the *House of Children* and *Herself Surprised* you speak of is probably a fact but to me it is a jump not from one boat to another but from one rope to another on the same boat, say jib to main sheet.' Obviously, therefore, the 'jump' was not consciously designed, and formed no part of a deliberate pattern of achievement. Nevertheless, when he made it he opened for himself a vast new landscape, the effects of which upon his work have been immediate.

Joyce Cary believes that, so far as unity of form goes, *Mister Johnson* is his best book—'but of course it was not trying to do so much as later more complex books, so it had not so much room for failure.' There is an important point here. Of all the novels, *Mister Johnson* is certainly the strongest architecturally. Construction is Joyce Cary's most evident weakness. His books do not move steadily in pace, but are inclined to shamble, wander, or race along suddenly. They begin well, they are full of lovely oddities along the way, and they inevitably end with a most exquisite rightness (Cary is fond of allowing a character to bring a novel to its end with one perfect remark, statement or

affirmation); but in between whiles the narrative tends to sag, to turn back upon itself, to tie itself into knots.

Mister Johnson is a plain tale of a young African clerk, a friendly, delightful, warm-hearted thief and murderer who, when he is at last sentenced to be hanged, has to be executed by the poor bewildered Assistant District Officer who would undertake any job in the world rather than this one. Cary's understanding of Johnson's mind makes his story deeply touching. The final episode, of tragedy disguised by unfailing good manners and good humour, is probably the best single scene the author has ever achieved.

Castle Corner, which is Irish political history seen through the eyes of a child, is not so successful. I always prefer political complexities to be seen through the eyes of an intelligent adult; and I believe the whole conception of the work, for all that work's incidental brilliancies, is at fault here. *A House of Children* is very much finer. (It was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize.) This is the story of an Irish childhood as the child sees it, and not as the man remembers. The book preceded Existentialism by several years, so cannot be held as subscribing to it; but it confirms my belief that the child, for whom nothing is real save the moments of experience in the Here and Now, is the natural Existentialist, and that adults who adopt the same philosophy are merely retrogressing towards the irresponsible condition of infancy.

The clouds and gauzes of glory are thick upon this book, parting now and again to reveal, in almost supernatural clarity, this face, this rock, this house, this tree, this look of joy or of sudden inexplicable anger. It is a novel of great radiance and a striking transmission of buried experience.

The story of the three linked novels, *Herself Surprised*, *To Be a Pilgrim*, and *The Horse's Mouth*, is the story of Sara Monday. Sara, a gay young cook, adorably fleshly as a girl of Renoir's, marries her employer, a nice poor stick, and for a while becomes a lady. Her loving nature, however, soon leads her into difficulties.

'By now I was in the fury of my life when a woman has no

time to know herself or anything else, unless she is strong in remembrance of her religious duty and can fend off the world.' (This pietistic tone results from the influence of the prison chaplain, who is able to bring Sara back to grace at leisure when, at the end of the book, she is sentenced for petty pilfering.) First, Sara is rather too free with her husband's friend, Mr. Hickson. Then she falls under the spell of the scruffy, wife-bashing genius Gulley Jimson, who understands precisely what William Blake meant to say. (Perhaps because he resembled a Blake reincarnated, and deteriorated in the process. At all events, the physical description of Jimson is in accord with Blake's.) Sara begins to pose for Jimson—first a hand, then a neck, then the whole thing; and Jimson paints Sara in her bath. The bath pictures, one day, are to be wildly sought by collectors all over the world, but Sara never ceases to be rather ashamed of them. Nina, Jimson's wife, dies. Matt, who is Sara's husband, dies also. Sara, after she and Jimson have botched the business of getting married, decides to live with him. And so together they go.

Sara doesn't exactly love Jimson; he fascinates her. He has something of the animal magnetism of Quilp, a great deal of Quilp's humour, and—in modified form—of Quilp's driving daemon. Life with Jimson is unexpected and delightful, until he takes to beating her, but after a while she even puts up with that. One day he simply walks out on her, and doesn't come back.

Sara takes a new place as a cook, with poor old dubious Mr. Wilcher; and she naturally becomes his mistress, although the whole affair is conducted on both sides with praiseworthy propriety. Mr. Wilcher would have married Sara had not the relatives, in their spite and jealousy, manœuvred him out of the way and then had her boxes searched by the police.

Herself Surprised is narrated by Sara. *To Be a Pilgrim* is Mr. Wilcher's dignified and acceptable apologia for his errors. *The Horse's Mouth*, beyond any doubt Joyce Cary's finest book, is Jimson's tale of his gorgeous and scoundrelly old age, of his unintentional murder of poor Sara, and of his coming amusedly and with resignation to his death-bed.

It is a comic masterpiece; more than that, it is the most

piercing study of the artist's mind in the whole of English literature. This may appear broad praise, but I can see no reason to qualify it. The book itself has imperfections, noticeably in the construction; but Jimson himself is a flawless creation. Cary's intense visual sense comes into its own here. The greatest thing in Jimson's life is *seeing*, seeing everything in terms of paint, all things automatically boxed into marvellous composition. Jimson, as a man, is a basher, a cheat and a swindler, an ugly little prowler of doss-houses, the anti-social being at its nadir; as an artist he has absolute nobility. He is not robbed of it by his grand absurdities—by the mural of large naked Feet forced upon an innocent millionaire, by the fabulous painting of the woman-faced whale on the walls of the condemned chapel, by the rude fun he pokes constantly at himself and at his own pictures. He is sustained by the angelic arrogance that was Blake's, and by the certainty of his own right of genius to deride, to condemn, and to exalt. The Sara-Wilcher-Jimson trilogy is among the most imposing of our time in its luxury of human language and human understanding.

After *The Horse's Mouth*, *The Moonlight* falls quietly: a contemplative book, the tale mooning back and forth from past to present, the two old women about whom the narrative is woven no more than frustrate ghosts of time wasted, who, by some vague oversight, find themselves still living.

'... Freedom,' Cary writes in a letter, 'is not an abstract . . . or a vague licence to take a holiday from necessity, but a power, and a very queer power which we don't know much about. Freedom, in short, is to *do* what we like, to use our power, and what people like is also an interesting study. For it is only begging the question to say they want happiness—the Christian martyrs were happy to be roasted alive. What's more, people can't get rid of freedom if they want to—freedom is the character of their very being—they are obliged to act, to think, to choose, to take responsibilities. Rose in *The Moonlight* is a tragic being because she had to take responsibility for others, who hated her in return, and Ella's tragedy was that she was cut off by one accident or another (including Rose's sense of responsibility)

from using her responsibility and satisfying that mysterious and powerful force which worked in and through her.'

Amanda, Ella's daughter, finds herself at the book's end in a complex predicament for which there is only one immediate solution. She uses her freedom to reject that solution, uses it to remain in the mess; it is a characteristic and dauntless decision. 'She was visibly a woman of the world, at grips with its lonely and mortal necessity.'

This is a profound book, and in many ways an exacting one. It demands a careful first reading, and a second reading even more careful and slow. The 'difficulties' of the narration, the sliding to and fro along the scale of time and the switching from one personality to another, give it a certain turgidness. The colours are subdued, grey and black and tarnished silver, throwing into high relief the wonderful and lurid scene at the fair, where Amanda, with a somnambulistic, academic interest, goes expressly for the purpose of letting herself be seduced by the farmer Harry Dawbarn.

The sun had sunk behind the hills which rise steeply all round Pimmouth, but the sky was still bright, a thousand times more brilliant in green and gold than the brightest Chinese dragon lamps, so that the effect was rather that of dawn after an all-night party, when no one has troubled to extinguish dying lamps, than twilight, prematurely dressed out with foggy shades and rusted knots of wire. In competition with the brilliance of the whole sky, lanterns, and even the strong acetylene lamps of the fair theatre, could bring out only the pink stripes upon a few square feet of dirty canvas, or throw deeper shadows into the hollow worn face of some gypsy preparing for another night's battle with the crowd. And all these faces seen by glimpses from sky or lamp, had a grotesque or even terrible look; the foolish terror of sheep; the staring wonder of lunatics, the brutality of the stupid or bewildered; the resignation of cripples. 'And they're all decent, quiet people from villages like Brook and Ancombe,' Amanda thought. 'These tragic looks are only the effects of the lights. Or is it because it is only by these lights and at the beginning of a fair when there is nothing else to do, that one really looks at faces and sees their true shapes.'

Joyce Cary has written two works of political science, *Power*

in *Men* and *The Case for African Freedom*, both of which are of special interest to readers of his African novels. In 1945 he wrote a long narrative poem, *Marching Soldier*, which had, I found, a curious delayed action on the mind; and probably for that reason did not receive the attention it merited.

On the whole, this is not an era of literary richness. The works of fiction which have attracted attention during the past decade—the novels of Isherwood, Rex Warner, Henry Green, have this in common: an extreme economy of expression that seems to spring from some neurosis based on the fear of self-betrayal. In an age of fear, men have felt safe only in their own silences. The one word too many would be the dangerous word, the word to bring the whole edifice of endurable living crashing down with a thunder that would resound until the end of the world. Most people will have experienced the curious silences of war. Soldiers waiting for the shells to fall would tiptoe about, almost holding their breath, so as not to miss the distant pop that gave warning of danger. People in towns would keep the wireless very low, that they might not fail to hear the siren. People in Morrison shelters would speak in whispers so as not to miss the small strumming noises of the flying bomb approaching from miles away.

And many of the writers whose influence lies most heavily upon our time speak still in small, clear, clipped voices. Delicacy is all: subtlety is all: the significant word here, the pause there, and here the most important incident deliberately omitted—these things are all. It has been a comprehensive trend, this trend towards perfect smallness, and it has produced work of brilliant quality: but if the English novel continues along these lines it will fall into complete silence.

The great need is a return to richness, and to the full voice. This is why Joyce Cary is so significant a novelist. His work has the ripeness of the eighteenth century, and its rough humanities, but is instinct with awareness of the world as it is to-day. He is a writer essentially realistic, uninhibited enough to enjoy his life and his work, seeing no reason why he should not communicate through his writings this energy and pleasure. His books are

aware of sorrow but free of fear; aware of evil, but free of damnation: free of bogies, free of the Furies, free of despair.

George Orwell

PAUL POTTS

It is a custom of one's contemporaries to dismiss the present as an age more venal, less decent and with a wider lack of integrity than that of any of its immediate predecessors. Although it is obviously true that public opinion was a more successful advocate for ordinary decency during the latter half of the nineteenth century than at any time since and possibly before, yet this generation of ours in English letters has produced a writer who, if he were but more typical, could have caused these decades to appear as some other Augustan Age of integrity. That writer is George Orwell. One's general impression of a city is often summed up by one building. One's impression of the countryside is often focused on one's memory by a particular field or wood. So too the common denominator, the atmosphere and the whole tempo of a writer's work may be recorded by just one sentence. The following sentence, quoted from memory, is the barometer of the whole range of Orwell's work.

'A wall must be judged by the way it is built. The function it performs is quite separable from this, yet no wall in the world is well-built enough to be allowed to remain standing if it surrounds a concentration camp.' That sentence written in an English made familiar by Hazlitt and Swift and Tom Paine is the kind of thing you'll find if you take *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

When I was a boy I used to think that the really intelligent of the world were irrevocably on the side of the poor of the world. Furthermore, that words like socialism and revolution meant, when translated into non-political language, something pretty much the same as beauty and goodness. Being around in

the 'thirties soon cured one of that, but reading Orwell shows how fundamentally correct was that early belief. The great thing about Orwell is that he is angry, angry at meanness and angry at injustice. That he personally is not necessarily the target of the meanness and the injustice in no way calms that anger. H. G. Wells remarks in his history of the world, that a rich Roman would keep a scribe among his slaves as he would keep a performing dog. In this atmosphere literary criticism, meticulous, timid and quarrelsome was evolved. Such is the permanence of these cowards that although Wells is talking of the contemporaries of Virgil, one is reminded of the contributors of the left reviews of our time. The measuring rod of all Orwell's criticism whether it be of Stalin (*Animal Farm*), Henry Miller (*Inside the Whale*) or Kipling (*Critical Essays*) is really basic decency and human goodness. What Orwell really stands for is what Ibsen longed for so deeply, 'An aristocratic element must come into our political life, into our parliament and press. I am of course, not thinking of an aristocracy of birth, emphatically not one of money, not of an aristocracy of knowledge, not even of ability and talent. But I have in mind an aristocracy of character and mind and will. It is that alone that can make us free.'

George Orwell is the one English writer who has really brought our literature into communion with what has been happening to culture in the rest of Europe, and perhaps this is because he is the most English of them all. To talk about Orwell at all, one has to give words a meaning that is no longer current to them. In order that it be true to say that he is a journalist, one must remember that Swift was also a journalist. More than any English writer of our time he is conscious of the real meaning in the pattern of Europe as it is woven into men's minds by such books as *Fontamara* and *Darkness at Noon*.

He is an excellent example of the fact that to be really international one must be a native of some particular locality. Unlike most of the men with whom he is worthy to be compared, he is not an ex-communist. He reserves the full force of his satire and his love of truth for those who raise up tyranny in the name

of liberty. He would rather have a blimp than a bureaucrat. Orwell is not primarily an artist, which makes it all the more strange that he uses language so magnificently. His own explanation would be that the ability to think creatively contains within it the ability to express those thoughts clearly. That the end conditions the means, that if one really is concerned with freedom rather than with power, the language one uses to express that concern will bear some relationship to that which is being discussed. It is noticeable that those whose hunger for power drives them to use language, write in a manner reminiscent of a machine gun in action.

That incorruptible concern for truth, that deep respect for human individuality, that knife-like ability to cut through pomp and cant, which is the legacy of those who in the past cared more for the English language than they did for the British Empire, has been fully inherited by one who realizes that the fields of England, for all their very real beauty, border upon a road which leads to Wigan Pier. It was not mere coincidence that the one Left-wing writer of any real talent who had the courage to state openly that he liked English things, such as suet pudding and roasts of beef, was also the only English writer who had the courage to pay a *Homage to Catalonia* that was not lip service to the Kremlin. The motive of Orwell's hatred of Imperialism is a permanent and real love of England, not a sentimentalizing and transitory infatuation for India. This attitude has its weaknesses like all others. I would not like to hear that he was writing a book about the Irish. Yet this attitude did produce *Animal Farm*, which is already a contemporary European classic, while those writers who, using this language, aped the foreigner, have not succeeded in becoming even Eastern European satellites. Orwell is more like a nineteenth-century New Englander than a twentieth-century Englishman.

Although it sounds like a line from the script of a Max Munden film when one has said it, we are actually passing through a period of transition, the long, narrow and rocky straits between two oceans. There is an added factor that must be taken into account, which is the mass betrayal by the intellectuals of

the very essence of their function in society, which is a devotion to independence, a regard for the means and not merely an interest in the ends, a love of truth for its own sake, a constitutional inability to sell or to hire one's talents. Such a betrayal on such a scale is something new in human history.

The real poetry of Orwell's work is due to the class from which it comes. That class which has administered the Colonial Empire has, at just about the time that history is causing its function to become obsolete, produced out of its own conception of honour and truth a writer who adding to these his own ability, has contributed to the literature of the age work of first importance. Orwell's talents are concerned with ideas, not with people. That is why among his books his novels are hardly remembered; and if he adds a character to that world of English fiction of which Little Nell as well as King Lear are citizens, it will be, not 'The Clergyman's Daughter' but 'Boxer,' the horse in *Animal Farm*. That conception of English virtues that still flourishes in America and the Dominions is more truly expressed by Orwell than ever it was by Kipling. Truth is George Orwell's trade, and the tools he uses are a love of freedom and a desire for equality. Because of the unnatural inequality that exists in the world to-day it may be sometimes necessary to help a lame dog over a stile, but Orwell, at any rate, has the intelligence to ask the dog, if it really is this particular stile that he wishes to cross, and from those who are not themselves the victims there can be no greater courtesy.

To sum up then, during a period when the relationship between literature and politics was more talked about than at perhaps any other, Orwell was the one English writer who successfully concerned himself with giving to political writing a literary form. In order to achieve this he had to be a true writer and also to possess an organic, inside himself, interest in those things which are the concern of politics; liberty, equality and fraternity. To a writer like Orwell freedom itself is beautiful, and without it no other beauty can exist. There is a long distance between this kind of writer and those whose real concern is elsewhere, but who from basic instincts of common decency

side with the anti-tyranny forces. Sometimes this needs courage and sometimes not. For in fact it took more courage for a poet of Mr. Eliot's distinction to publish a book about cats than it did for other poets to speak on a Spanish Republican platform in England during the 'thirties.

Although Coleridge, perhaps the one outstanding critic in the whole of English literature, was of this temperament and of this tradition, literary criticism for the most part has by-passed the great radicals. Hazlitt seems to be the only one to have been included completely in the canon. How our criticism has failed to cope with the work of Gerald Winstanly, Tom Paine, Thomas Jefferson, John Mitchell and Abraham Lincoln, to name only some, as literature. In fact critics seem always to neglect, if not to ignore, those who serve great causes. How few people realize what a magnificent writer of English prose the Elizabethans produced in Saint Edmund Campion S.J. Yet some writers, undisputably of the first rank, have been primarily concerned with something other than writing. Dante with Beatrice, Whitman with Democracy, and St. John of the Cross with God.

There is to-day room inside the language of our forebears for the kind of talk no policeman would approve of. This pressing present need should give public courage to many a private coward. Let us brave the burning faggots of their scorn, briefed, as we are, in defence of our own early dreams, that let great beauty hid by poverty appear. The writer in the generation immediately to follow Orwell's own, who has most in common with him, is Alex Comfort. But Comfort is on the one hand more specialized and on the other less courageous. Orwell was produced by a generous and optimistic world, based on an expanding economy—a world with a big sixpence. Perhaps sadly he is the last of his type for some generations to come. Just as when one walks through London streets, one notices in the behaviour of the English the seeds which, under more distant circumstances, develop into the British colonial manner; so, too, while one reads Orwell, one gets a whisper and a whiff, one smells, sees, hears, or perhaps just imagines that English thing, that Commonwealth, which was born under a blazing Saxon sun

in some unhedged Wessex field, and which grew to full stature in the talks Tom Paine had with William Blake on the sidewalks of this town. But the surf of time crests slowly. Cruel facts may cause this world to fall. But you can rest assured that George Orwell will prune and carve until time has pushed the darkness from the day. His destination may well lie outside the curve of this generation's day, but he has bailed out all things meaningless and pretentious, he has cleared the decks.

His position in the literary Left is somewhat similar to that which Parnell achieved in Irish politics, and to lengthen the parallel many of his colleagues remind one of Tim Healy. Orwell's democracy is spontaneous, and his belief in socialism basic. Yet he won't let a slogan masquerade as liberty, nor will he dislike a thing merely because it has been abused by the privileged. He is one of the few writers of our generation who has not been tripped by the fallacy that everything anti-British is necessarily progressive. He belongs to the world of Cunningham-Graham and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt; to the detriment of its neighbours it is a world but thinly populated, where narrow paths to truth and justice are followed, however thick and marshy the facts through which they lead may be.

In his writings which range from discovering just why there were no orchids for Miss Blandish to watching the swans on the lake at Coole, from surrealism to suet puddings, from Dickens to Billy Bunter, from Kipling to King Street, Mr. Orwell manages uniquely to combine the courtesy of an almost forgotten grand manner with the technical skill of a modern mechanic. Orwell can write better English than anyone who is not a considerable artist.

He continually emphasizes the relationship between shoddy thinking, expressed in sloganized language, and those who, demanding a yes, don't wait for an answer. It is because he is not primarily an artist—neither for that matter was Swift, and this statement, if true, in no way detracts from their respective statures—that Orwell is less defeatist than Koestler. His first-rateness consists in his mingling common sense with originality. Orwell's courage makes him an easy target for the ill-assorted

pack of his political enemies, but you don't steal the sharpness from a unicorn's horns merely by getting them inside your sights. It would take a lot of committees to talk away the million copies and the fourteen foreign translations of *Animal Farm*.

Orwell defends P. G. Wodehouse and with some justice, as the attack against him was led by the agents of the real quislings to draw attention away from themselves, but he is as incapable of understanding Ezra Pound as it would be for him to obtain a Russian visa. Orwell is not at his best when writing of poetry. (Yeats and elsewhere Eliot he does understand.) This is worth mentioning because he can write English, which, however different, can still only be compared with that of those whose whole being is saturated with that undefinable something which is the very essence of real poetry. His writing is strong without being muscular; it has charm and reverence without being either awe-struck or woolly; it concerns itself with things of everyday without being commonplace.

He uses language to damage a tyranny he cannot destroy, to take the policeman's baton from the schoolteacher's hand. To puncture the greed he does not share, and to call attention to the beauty it is not his business to create. Dean Swift long ago answered Orwell's political enemies, when he said that the mark of talent was that it soon becomes a target for a confederacy of dunces. His work is an example of the criticism that it is the nature of compassion to associate with misfortune. Once before a good bad poet from the pacific coast of North America, when writing of the books of another great English radical, asked that among these laurel leaves and this English oak and holly, his spray of western pine be deemed not too presumptuous a folly. Now only those who still think that the Chinese are really heathens or that Uriah Heep was actually ever sorry; only those who ignored beauty and who are frightened of the truth, will mind if that request is here repeated.

Bibliography

THE following brief details about contemporary British and Irish little reviews and literary collections are printed in order to give some background knowledge of this scattered field of publications. The name of editor, address, price and frequency of appearance are given at the end of each summary. Any reader seeking further information can best obtain it by sending for a copy of the current issue of the publication or publications in which he is interested. It should be emphasized that this list, though fairly comprehensive, is by no means complete. Some new reviews appeared too late for selections to be made from their pages, but details are included in order that the bibliography may be as efficient as possible. The editor would be glad to receive details of any publications not at present included.

Adam. An international review printed in English and French, and concentrating on presenting the work of leading writers of all countries, with special emphasis on Europe. Contributors have included Jean-Paul Sartre, Denis Saurat, H. G. Wells, Hermon Ould, Erik de Mauny, Hugo Manning, John Heath-Stubbs. *Adam* is edited by Miron Grindea, and published monthly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 28 Emperor's Gate, London, S.W.7.

Adelphi. One of the oldest of present-day little reviews, the *Adelphi*, was recently taken over by the novelist, Henry Williamson, from the founder, J. Middleton Murry. Articles, stories, sketches and poems are published, as well as critical studies of writers and philosophers. Contributors have included Ethel Mannin, J. Hampden Jackson, Frank Lea, Earl of Portsmouth, Richard Ward, James Kirkup, Bill Grindlay and J. P. Hogan. *Adelphi* is edited by Henry Williamson, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Upper Welland, Malvern, Worcs.

Bell. The aim of this review is 'to let Irish life speak for itself.' While favouring what it terms 'realistic nationalism,' the review opposes the romantic type of nationalism preached by the Gaelic League. In addition to some excellent short stories about Irish life and characters, *Bell* prints regular articles and criticism on Irish drama, education, music, poetry, village crafts, together with book reviews and poetry. Studies of literature and life in other countries are often included. Contributors have included Frank O'Connor, Geoffrey Taylor, John Hewitt, Sean Jennett, Roy McFadden, W. R. Rodgers, Bryan MacMahon, Valentin Iremonger and Peadar O'Donnell. *Bell* is edited by Peadar O'Donnell, and published monthly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 43 Parkgate Street, Dublin, Eire.

Books. This journal, official organ of the National Book League, has recently been revised and expanded, and now appears as a monthly literary

review, with articles and criticism both by members and by outside writers. Contributors have included Alan Dent, Kenneth Lindsay, Reginald Moore, Jack Aistrop, Arthur Calder-Marshall and John Baker. *Books* is edited by John Hadfield, and published monthly, from 7 Albemarle Street, London, W.1.

Chelsea. The editors of this magazine claim 'probably more famous people to the square mile live in Chelsea than in any other part of the British Isles . . . what Chelsea thinks and does in the sphere of the Five Arts is the only thing worth doing and thinking, and the rest of the world should know about it.' Contributors have included William Kean Seymour, Peter Noble, Ursula Bloom, Arnold L. Haskell, Hubert Griffith, Bernard D. Denvir. *Chelsea* is published monthly, price 1s. per copy, from 39 King's Road, London, S.W.3.

Cornhill. Since it was launched under the editorship of Thackeray, in January 1860, this review has published most of the great writers of the time. Although it had to cease publication in 1939, it was revived towards the end of 1943, and the first issue in a new format appeared in January 1944. The policy is to try to provide a platform for full-length essays and extensive critical and biographical studies which do not usually find space in magazines. At the same time each issue usually contains at least one story and some poetry. Contributors have included John Betjeman, Elizabeth Bowen, Raymond Mortimer, John Piper, Maurice Bowra, Clive Bell, Tom Harrison, John Russell, Osbert Lancaster, Philip Toynbee, William Sansom and Robin Ironside. *Cornhill* is edited by Peter Quennell, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1.

Cornish Review. One of the most recent of the regional reviews, this provides a regular survey of cultural activities in a county that has a long and independent tradition of its own. Regular features include articles on their work by Cornish craftsmen, portraits of Cornish towns and beauty spots, and critical studies of writers and artists in Cornwall. Contributors have included Ronald Duncan, A. L. Rowse, Jack R. Clemo, R. Morton Nance, Frances Bellerby. *Cornish Review* is edited by Denys Val Baker and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Barn Cottage, Lelant Downs, Hayle, Cornwall.

Country Town. A Cornish quarterly magazine sponsored by the St. Austell Society, which organises art, drama and other group activities. Contents include articles about life in Cornwall, poems, sketches and illustrations. Contributors have included Daphne Hutchings, Sidney Sheer, H. Hancock and W. H. Julian. *Country Town* is edited by H. J. Willmott and published, price 1s. per copy, from St. Benet's, Tywardreath, Par, Cornwall.

Decachord. This review is one of the oldest-established of modern poetry collections. Its policy is expressed in the words: 'Run in the interests

of living poets and their readers, for the publication of high-class poetry.' It provides one of the few remaining outlets for a type of traditional and lyrical poetry which does not now seem to receive much attention in other contemporary poetry reviews. *Decachord* is edited by Philippa Hole, and published bi-monthly, price 1s. per copy, from 31 Brick Street, Piccadilly, London, W.1.

Dublin Magazine. Founded in the summer of 1923, this review is one of the most influential of Irish literary publications and has published almost every Irish writer of note during the past twenty-three years. Apart from book and play reviews, art criticism and Irish folk-lore studies, a good deal of space is given to creative writing in the form not only of short stories and poetry, but also of short plays—a feature not often found in reviews. In a reference to *Dublin Magazine's* coming-of-age the editor mentioned that it is read not only in European countries, but also in U.S.A., South Africa, Australia, India, China, Japan, E. and W. Africa. Contributors have included Mary Lavin, J. Lyle Donaghy, J. Redwood Anderson, Donagh MacDonagh, Maurice James Craig, Padraic Fallon, Austin Clarke, Edward Sheehy, Paul Vincent Carroll and L. A. G. Strong. *Dublin Magazine* is edited by Seumas O'Sullivan, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 2 Crow Street, Dublin, Eire.

English. This is the official organ of the English Association, a semi-official body which exists to develop interest in English literature and writers. For this reason a certain amount of space is given over to Association affairs, reports on meetings, literary competitions, etc., but at the same time a considerable part of the magazine is devoted to articles, short stories and sketches, poetry and critical studies, as well as several book reviews per issue. On special occasions—such as the death of a leading English writer—most of an issue will be given to special appreciations and criticisms of the writer and his work. In the case of poetry, preference is given to the work of younger writers. *English* is edited by George Cookson, and published three times a year, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 3 Cromwell Place (2nd Floor), London, S.W.7.

English Story. Published in book form, this collection of about twenty new stories by British writers is one of several publications (devoted entirely to short stories) which have helped to create a much wider interest in this form of writing. Only unpublished stories are printed, a policy to give encouragement to newer writers. Contributors have included James Hanley, Elizabeth Berridge, Dorothy K. Haynes, Frank O'Connor, William Sansom, Rhys Davies, Fred Urquhart, Willy Goldman, Anna Kavan, Sylvia Townsend Warrar, Neil Bell and Henry Treece. *English Story* is edited by Woodrow Wyatt, and published occasionally, price 8s. 6d. per copy, from 14 St. James's Place, London, S.W.1.

Exe. This magazine is published by the Literary Society of the University College of the South-West of England, and contains stories,

sketches, poetry and critical notes. Contributors have included Hugh Street, Norman L. Segeal, S. Gorley Putt, W. F. Jackson Knight, Auriol Lucas and Laurence Dobie. *Exe* is edited by John Hocknell and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from University College, Exeter.

Facet. All matters concerned with the developments of the arts—literature, theatre, music, painting, sculpting, etc.—are dealt with in this magazine, with special emphasis on activities in the West of England. Considerable enterprise is shown, as for example giving over a whole issue to a consideration of the progress of Dartington Hall. Contributors have included Lewis Wilshire, P. Britten Austin, Ergo Jones, John Atkins and W. Willets. *Facet* is published quarterly, price 2s. per copy, from 14 Downleaze, Stoke Bishop, Bristol 9.

Focus. This is the title of a series of collections devoted entirely to the criticism of contemporary writing, and allocating the bulk of each issue to a study of a particular writer, his work and how it may have been influenced by writers of the past. The usual method is to send out a study of the writer to a number of critics and publish their comments and articles on the subject. A limited number of general articles on art and literature, and a few stories and poems are also published. Contributors include D. S. Savage, Walter Allen, Norman Nicholson, Julian Symons, Kathleen Raine, Louis Adeane, George Woodcock, John Atkins, Harold Osborn and R. G. Lienhardt. *Focus* is edited by B. Rajan and Andrew Pearse, and published occasionally, price 8s. 6d. per copy, from 12 Park Place, St. James' Street, London, S.W.1.

Here Today. Another publication with cultural aims applying itself to the activities of a single town (in this case, Reading). Agreeing that there is a great need for 'planning hard' to remove the many deficiencies of modern towns and cities, *Here Today* presents such features as detailed surveys of local drama, with suggestions for improvement; studies of the work of novelists with Reading connections; and stories, sketches, poems by local writers. The policy is to stress the need for reviving the spirit of community. Among contributors are Elizabeth Taylor, Harold Casey, Ernest M. Frost, Vera Flower, Shirley Cleverdon, A. R. Rose and Arthur Davies-Jones. *Here Today* is edited by Pierre Edmunds and Roland Mathias, and published occasionally, price 1s. 3d. per copy, from 16 Argyle Street, Reading, Berks.

Horizon. Founded at the beginning of 1940 this review has maintained a high standard of writing, both in regard to articles and to the occasional short stories and poetry published. *Horizon* specializes in publishing long critical and analytical studies of the arts—covering literature, music, painting, poetry, etc. The policy of the paper is to try to help increase the interest in, and standard of, contemporary culture in all forms, with particular reference to European culture. Reproductions of paintings are

included in many issues. Contributors have included E. Sackville-West, Enid Starkie, Louis MacNeice, Stephen Spender, Arthur Koestler, W. R. Rodgers, John Betjeman, Anna Kavan, Osbert Sitwell, Augustus John and Kathleen Raine. *Horizon* is edited by Cyril Connolly and published monthly, price 2s. per copy, from Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

International Short Stories. Launched with the aim of helping to increase international friendship and understanding, this publication presents short stories by writers of different nationalities. Preference is given to stories which illustrate the national characteristics and background of the writers' native countries. Contributors have included Mulk Raj Anand, Hsiao Chi'en, Mary Lavin, Damon Runyon, Elizabeth Myers, Pavel Bazhov, Gwyn Jones, J. Kessel, Rhys Davies, Fay King and F. Kuznetsov. *International Short Stories* is edited by Denys Val Baker, and published occasionally, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from The Barn Cottage, Lelant Downs, Hayle, Cornwall.

Irish Bookman. This review specializes in literary portraits and articles on books and authors in Ireland. Contributors have included Denis Ireland, Benedict Kiely, Pearse Hutchinson, Thomas McGreevy, Robert Greacen. *Irish Bookman* is edited by Seamus Campbell, and published monthly, price 1s. per copy, from 2-3 Yarnhall Street, Dublin.

Irish Writing. A new collection of Irish short stories, with occasional critical surveys by leading Irish critics. Contributors have included Jim Phelan, Liam O'Flaherty, Mary Lavin, Robert Greacen, Padraic Colum and Oliver St. John Gogarty. *Irish Writing* is edited by David Marcus and Terence Smith, and published occasionally, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 15 Adelaide Street, Cork, Eire.

Lagan. This is one of the best known of the literary magazines serving the Ulster group of writers. Its aim is to provide a cross-section of contemporary writing in Northern Ireland. A large number of stories, sketches and poems are published, as well as several critical articles and studies of Northern Ireland writers and other writers with Irish connections. Contributors have included D. J. O'Sullivan, Sam Hanna Bell, Edward Sheehy, May Morton, M. J. Craig, John Hewitt, Roy McFadden, Oliver Edwards, Denis Ireland and Robert Greacen. *Lagan* is edited by John Boyd, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Ballymaeash, Lisburne, N. Ireland.

Life and Letters Today. Launched soon after the 1914-18 war, under the editorship of Desmond McCarthy, this review now incorporates the *London Mercury* and *Bookman*, taken over just before the outbreak of the more recent war. In addition to book reviews and literary articles, extensive space is given to poems and stories by new and established writers. Sometimes an entire issue is devoted very largely to the work of one writer, or of one group of writers, or perhaps to the writers of one country.

Welsh, Irish, Scottish, Indian, American, Brazilian, Chinese and other national cultures have been dealt with in this way. Contributors have included Jack Lindsay, Fred Urquhart, Gwyn Jones, Dylan Thomas, Vernon Watkins, Henry Treece, Alex Comfort, Robert Greacen, Maurice Lindsay, Osbert Sitwell, Kate Roberts and Stefan Schimanski. *Life and Letters Today* is edited by Robert Herring, and published monthly, price 1s. per copy, from 430 Strand, London, W.C.2.

London Forum. A review of literature and art and current affairs, this paper claims to 'have no leanings towards any political party' but to have the purpose of seeking the truth wherever it may be hidden. Contributors have included Paul Winterton, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Michael Balcon, Anthony M. Ludovici, Fred Marnau, Arturo Barea, G. W. Stonier, John Heath-Stubbs, Val Gielgud, Quintin Hogg and C. E. M. Joad. *London Forum* is edited by Warwick Charlton, and published occasionally, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 7 Crown Passage, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

Mandrake. Described as "an Oxford review of the arts" this is a very well produced magazine which publishes a large amount of critical matter, with some short stories and poetry. Contributors have included C. Day Lewis, Hardiman Scott, Audrey Beecham, James Kirkup and William Robson. *Mandrake* is edited by Arthur Boyars and John Wain and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Wadham College, Oxford.

Mid-Day. Short stories and articles, and a number of woodcuts and other illustrations are the main feature of this collection. The editors claim that there is no special purpose other than the publishing of good writing. Contributors have included Stevie Smith, Inez Holden, Hugh Popham, Betty Miller and Pat Jackson. *Mid-Day* is edited by Antoinette Pratt Barlow, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 9 Alfred Street, Oxford.

Modern Reading. One of the first of the now popular cheap-priced collections of contemporary stories, this has developed steadily during the war and post-war years. Its contents are of a catholic variety, and include writings by some of the foremost short-story writers, both English and overseas, as well as work by new writers. Critical studies and articles are also occasionally published. Contributors have included Elizabeth Berridge, John Atkins, Sid Chaplin, Ronald Mason, John Wain, Howard Spring, Rhys Davies, Anais Nin, Betty Miller, Wallace Fowlie, Frances Bellerby, John Pudney and L. J. Daventry. *Modern Reading* is edited by Reginald Moore, and published occasionally, from Phoenix House, William IV Street, London, W.C.2.

New English Review. Before the war this was published as *Home and Empire*, and it was revived in its new form in May 1945. The review is

entirely independent and aims 'at providing a monthly commentary on contemporary developments in politics, literature and the arts.' In general, it reflects conservative and liberal viewpoints, and there is a strong Christian background. In addition to general articles and reviews, a limited number of poems and short stories are published, as well as occasional extracts from 'works in progress.' Contributors have included John Betjeman, Thomas Bodkin, T. S. Eliot, Edwin Muir, Kathleen Raine, Osbert Sitwell, Clifford Bax, Christopher Hollis, Quintin Hogg, Negley Farson, Hugh Kingsmill, John Piper and Arthur Bryant. *New English Review* is edited by Douglas Jerrold, and published monthly, price 3s. 6d. per copy, from 15 Bedford Street, London, W.C.2.

New Road. The object of this collection of prose and poetry is to interpret new trends and directions in the art and literature of Europe and other continents. Earlier issues were mostly concerned with work by British writers, but now the publication consists mostly of translations of essays, criticism and poetry by overseas writers of many nationalities, including French, Polish, German, Austrian, Italian, American, South American, Russian and Czecho-Slovakian. *New Road* is edited by Fred Marnau, and published occasionally, price 8s. 6d. per copy, from 7 Crown Passage, London, S.W.1.

New Shetlander. Established "to provide an outlet for literary, poetic and artistic work by young Shetlanders and Orcadians," this review publishes an excellent variety of material. Contributors have included Seton Gordon, William J. Tait, James R. Cheyne, Naomi Mitchison and Richard Perry. *New Shetlander* is edited by Peter Jamieson and published bi-monthly, price 1s. per copy, from Lerwick, Shetland Islands.

Northern Review. Described as 'a magazine devoted to the ideas and interests of the North,' this concentrates on articles about Northern activities in the sphere of music, art, theatre, etc. Short stories and poems are used, and a feature is the reproduction of several paintings and etchings. Contributors have included Graham Sutton, Phyllis Bentley, W. L. Andrews, Sid Chaplin and Howard Sergeant. *Northern Review* is published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per issue, from Clapham, via Lancaster, Lancashire.

Now. Gives the Anarchist interpretation and criticism of art and literature, and is now sponsored by the official publishers of Anarchist writings in Britain. Apart from a few poems and an occasional story or sketch, contents are made up of lengthy critical articles and studies of writers, artists, etc. Contributors have included D. S. Savage, Nicholas Moore, Alex Comfort, Herbert Read, Frederick Lohr, Louis Adeane, Albert McCarthy, Denis Preston, F. A. Ridley and Julian Symons. *Now* is edited by George Woodcock, and published quarterly, price 2s. per copy, from 5 Kensington Church Street, W.8.

Nowadays. Yet another regional magazine, this publication sets out to

cover activities in art and literature and music in the Sussex area. Notes from various local art societies are a feature. The magazine has separate editors for various aspects of the arts. Contributors have included Parnell Bradbury, Hamilton Fyffe, Jack Davis and Ronald Horton. *Nowadays* is edited by Cyril Stone and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 57 Tivoli Crescent, Brighton 5.

Orion. An occasional collection of prose and poetry, this publication has no set policy other than to publish first-class writings, mostly by established writers. A feature is made of larger works, extracts from novels, etc., which are not normally included in literary papers. Criticism of past and present writers, of a very high standard, is regularly included. Contributors have included Osbert Sirwell, William Sansom, Edith Sirwell, W. H. Auden, and the four editors, Rosamond Lehmann, Denys Kilham Roberts, Edwin Muir and C. Day Lewis. *Orion* is published occasionally, price 8s. 6d. per copy, from 26 Manchester Square, London, W.C.1.

Our Time. Formerly entitled *Poetry and the People*, this review now covers a wider field. Its aims are summarized as: (1) To develop the people's awakening desire for cultural enjoyment as a part of the whole struggle for fuller life. (2) To support all organizations bringing culture to the people. (3) To enlist the professional artist in the realization of these aims. Contributors have included Michael Redgrave, Hugh Sykes Davies, Thomas Russell, Beatrix Lehmann, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Ivor Montague, John Manifold, Jack Lindsay, Paul Potts, Honor Arundel, Jack Beeching and Hubert Nicholson. *Our Time* is edited by Frank Jellinek, and published monthly, price 6d. per copy, from 28-29 Southampton Street, London, W.C.2.

Outposts. A small review started 'to provide a convenient platform for younger writers. . . . We are concerned not only with the publication of outstanding poetry at a reasonable price, but also in assembling those poets, recognized and unrecognized, who, by reason of the particular outposts they occupy, are able to visualize the dangers and opportunities which confront the individual and the whole of humanity. Contributors have included Hardiman Scott, G. A. Wagner, Wrenne Jarman, Hugo Manning, J. Roderick Webb, Cyril Hughes, Sarah Stafford and John Manifold. *Outposts* is edited by Howard Sergeant, and published occasionally, price 1s. per copy, from 59 Orchard Avenue, Squire's Gate, Blackpool.

Penguin New Writing. A development, in cheaper form, of the *New Writing* book-magazine introduced some years before the war by Hogarth Press, this is one of the most influential of modern little reviews, especially as it has specialized in presenting a great deal of work by European writers that might not otherwise be available in this country. Increasing space has been given recently to surveys of contemporary music, painting, literature,

ballet, etc.—with emphasis on the need for bringing these arts to all classes of people. Contributors have included Stephen Spender, Jack Marlowe, Joseph Gurnard, Louis MacNeice, A. S. J. Tessimond, T. C. Worsley, Rosamond Lehmann, Laurie Lee, Fred Urquhart, William Plomer, Walter Allen, V. S. Pritchett, Lawrence Little, Roy Fuller, Terrence Tiller and Edith Sitwell. *Penguin New Writing* is edited by John Lehmann, and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from Penguin Books, Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex.

Poetry Commonwealth. Founded to provide a meeting ground for poetry by writers of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and Britain. Contributors have included Judith Wright, John Heath-Stubbs, Muriel Spark, C. S. Fraser, Iris Birtwistle. *Poetry Commonwealth* is edited by Lionel Monteith, and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 31 Dulwich Village, S.E.21.

Poetry (London). Believing that 'if such a magazine as *P.L.* existed before for publishing young poets the number of interesting poets in the '30's would have been much greater,' this collection hopes that by its policy it will help modern poets to get the wider hearing they deserve. Each issue contains, apart from poetry—including many long poems—a special poetry book review section, together with an occasional piece of poetic prose, and illustrations. Contributors have included Kenneth Allot, Laurence Clark, Nicholas Moore, John Hall, John Heath-Stubbs, G. S. Fraser, Francis Scarfe, W. S. Graham, Kathleen Raine, Anne Ridler and George Woodcock. *Poetry (London)* is edited by Tambimutti, and published occasionally from 26 Manchester Square, London, W.1.

Poetry Quarterly. Started in a small way some years before the war, this later changed ownership and has since been built up as one of the best outlets for the work of new and younger poets—being issued by one of the very few publishing houses specializing in poetry books. There is no over-riding policy other than to publish good poetry and let it speak for itself. About one-third of each issue is devoted to detailed reviews of new books of poetry. Contributors have included Nicholas Moore, Fred Marnau, Ernest Sigler, Sean Jennett, Alex Comfort, John Bayliss, John Hall, Norman Nicholson, Alan Rook, Keidrych Rhys, Hardiman Scott, Ruthven Todd and Christopher Middleton. *Poetry Quarterly* is edited by Wrey Gardiner, and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 7 Crown Passage, London, S.W.1.

Poetry Review. Founded as long as thirty-three years ago, this is the official journal of the Poetry Society of Great Britain, which publishes it 'not only for members but for general circulation, as a guide to what is best in poetry.' The paper has recently been modernized and improved and now prints a great deal of work by leading younger poets. Critical studies of poets, living and dead, are a feature of most issues. Contributors have included Edmund Blunden, Charles Morgan, Rostrevor Hamilton, Herbert

Palmer, Derek Stanford, Ruth Pitter, Herbert Corby, G. A. Wagner, Nicholas Moore, Patric Dickinson and John Buxton. *Poetry Review* is edited by Muriel Spark, and published monthly, price 1s. per copy, from 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

Poetry (Scotland). Launched to overcome 'a Burns hangover,' and to 'show Scotland herself, and the outside world, that she can produce poetry to-day which is as strong and moving as the poetry of England, Ireland, Wales or America,' this is yet another to strengthen the growing list of national and regional reviews. The bulk of the review is given over to new Scottish poetry, by poets of very differing outlooks (and including several poems in Gaelic and Lallans), but space is also given to representative poems by Welsh, Irish and English poets. Articles on new trends in Scottish poetry, and book reviews, are other features. Contributors have included Hugh MacDiarmid, Adam Drinan, J. F. Hendry, W. S. Graham, Ruthven Todd, Douglas Young, Edwin Muir, Sydney Smith and G. S. Fraser. *Poetry (Scotland)* is edited by Maurice Lindsay, and published occasionally, price 4s. 6d. per copy, from 240 Hope Street, Glasgow

Politics and Letters. This review, which now incorporates *The Critic*, sets out to provide a critical interpretation of latest developments in the literary, musical, theatrical and art fields. Contributors have included F. R. Leavis, R. C. Churchill, Julian Symons, Walter Taplin and B. Rajan. *Politics and Letters* is edited by Clifford Collins, Raymond Williams and Wolf Mankowitz, and published occasionally, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 7 Noel Street, London.

Prospect. Describing itself as 'the voice of the younger generation,' this magazine specializes in poetry, and prints articles and reviews of new poetry books, as well as original verse. Contributors have included John Grisdale, Harold Morland, Donald Cowie, Eric Nixon and Ellode Collins. *Prospect* is edited by Gladys Keighley, Harold F. Bradley, Edward Toeman and David West, and published bi-annually, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 17 Bromwich Road, Worcester.

Scottish Art and Letters. The aim of this publication, it is stated, is to aid the present revival in the artistic life of Scotland by providing a common platform—hitherto sadly lacking—where new and experimental work by Scottish poets and critics and story-writers can be assessed together. As with the companion publication, *Poetry (Scotland)*, the review endeavours to present work both in Gaelic and Lallans, and in English, though one of the aims is specifically to encourage the revival of Scots as a written language. Apart from short stories and articles, there are articles on art and education in Scotland, critical studies and several reproductions of paintings. Contributors have included J. F. Hendry, James Bridie, J. D. Fergusson, Adam Drinan, Maurice Lindsay, Norman McCaig, Somhairle MacGhilleathain, Morley Jamieson, A. S. Neill and Fred Urquhart.

Scottish Art and Letters is edited by R. Crombie-Saunders, with J. D. Fergusson as art editor, and published quarterly, price 5s. per copy, from 240 Hope Street, Glasgow.

Scots Writing. The aim of this review is to 'provide a broad and popular medium of Scottish expression, as distinct from the general writing of English . . . a publication devoted exclusively to Scots writing and Scots artists.' At the same time it is primarily a medium for new writers. Contents are made up of stories, sketches and poems, many of them in Scots dialect, together with illustrations. Contributors have included Margaret Hamilton, Coleman Milton, Peter Paterson, Naomi Mitchison, Malcolm Miller, Angus Baxter and John Lavin. *Scots Writing* is edited by P. McCrory and Alec Donaldson, and published occasionally, price 1s. per copy, from 69 Ingram Street, Glasgow, C.1.

Scrutiny. Described as 'a serious intellectual review of literature and cultural matter in general,' this has its roots in the university town of Cambridge and contains the work of many university dons and professors. Its standards of literary criticism are very exacting and scholastic. It is one of the few reviews able to give space for lengthy and detailed analyses of specific pieces of literature—i.e. a scene from a play, a section of a poem, one aspect of a writer's attitude. Contents are made up of a few general articles, critical studies of writers, and a large book review section. *Scrutiny* is edited by an editorial board of four, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Downing College, Cambridge.

Ulster Parade. A popular publication, concentrating mostly on fiction and poetry. Each issue contains several short stories and poems, along with articles of general interest to Irish Northern Ireland readers. Few literary studies are used, but short plays and other extracts are sometimes published. Contributors have included A. McC. Warnock, Frank Harris, J. A. Halliday, Clare West, Robert Black, Percy Maxwell, Sadie Harpur, Robert Bratton and Seamus O'Neill. *Ulster Parade* is published occasionally, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from the Quota Press, Belfast.

Voice of Scotland. Suspended at the beginning of the 1939-45 war, this review was re-issued again as from the end of 1945. The aim is to provide a regular review of Scottish arts and literature, generally from a Scottish nationalist point of view. Contributors have included Douglas Young, Sydney Smith, Somhairle Maclean, George Campbell Hay and Peter Cauns. *Voice of Scotland* is edited by Hugh MacDiarmid, and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 793 Argyle Street, Glasgow, C.3.

Vistas. A literary and philosophical review that appears from the West Country. For policy the reader is referred to the dictionary interpretation of 'vistas'—'mental views or visions of a far-reaching nature.' Contributors have included Laurence Housman, Eric Newton, Joseph

Wicksteed, F. H. Amphlett Micklewright. *Vistas* is edited by Donald Mullins and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from the Wessex Press, Priory Bridge Road, Taunton, Somerset.

Wales. Founded in 1937 this review helped very much in bringing about a Welsh literary revival just before the war. After having to cease publication for a period, it was revived and is now appearing regularly. The policy of the review is described as 'primarily cultural—in the broadest sense; it is non-party, independent, progressive, and will remain a platform for free expression.' While advocating the return to the use of Welsh for literature, the review at the same time encourages an Anglo-Welsh movement, pointing out 'we want to make them (the English) aware of Welsh differences and virtues. English is the only medium in which this can be done.' Contents comprise articles on Welsh literature, art, politics, and social life, together with critical studies, book reviews, poetry, sketches and stories. Contributors have included George Ewart Evans, Glyn Jones, Dilys Rowe, Rhys Davies, Huw Menai, Idris Davies, Robert Graves. Lynnette Roberts, Vernon Watkins, Nigel Heseltine and R. S. Thomas, *Wales* is edited by Keidrych Rhys, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Ty Gwyn, Llanybri, Nr. Carmarthen.

Welsh Review. Established before the war this review was also forced into a temporary cessation of publication, and later revived. Its policy is to print the best possible work, to encourage new writers, to introduce to English readers the work of leading Welsh writers—and at the same time to introduce to the Welsh-speaking Welsh something of what their English-speaking compatriots are thinking and doing—and to deal with the many political, economical, educational and religious problems on which there is need for Welsh unity. Each issue contains articles, critical studies, book reviews, poetry and short stories. Contributors have included Kate Roberts, Caradoc Evans, Brenda Chamberlain, Jack Jones, Edgar L. Chappell, John Petts, Idwal Jones, Iorwerth C. Peate and Gwilym Davies. *Welsh Review* is edited by Gwyn Jones, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 117 St. Mary Street, Cardiff.

West Country Magazine. This review has been established as a quarterly collection of stories, articles, reviews, etc., by writers connected with the West Country, either through birth or by adoption. Contributors have included Henry Williamson, Angela Du Maurier, Ronald Duncan, H. J. Wilmott, Geoffrey Grigson, Ernest Martin. *West Country Magazine* is edited by J. C. Trewin, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Tudor House, Princeton Street, London, W.C.1.

West-Countryman. This magazine publishes a series of articles on life and literature in the West Country, covering Gloucester, Wilts, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Glamorgan, Monmouth and Worcester. Contributors have included Col. Ian Browning, Guy Ramsay, Anthony

Gower, Lewis Wilshire. J. G. Garrett. *West-Countryman* is edited by Hugh Brandon-Cox, and published bi-monthly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from Market Lavington, Wiltshire.

Wind and the Rain. Started as a literary magazine by a group of students at Ampleforth College, Yorks, this has now developed into an independent review of modern literature and arts, with a Catholic background. Pointing out that 'hate will not conquer hate,' the review emphasizes that there have never been moments when men cease to be human beings, and urges continued working for the unity of all humanity. Contents consist mostly of articles and critical studies, most from a Catholic Christian point of view, together with book reviews, poetry and an occasional story or sketch. Contributors have included Paul Foster, D. S. Savage, Elizabeth Myers, Norman Nicholson, Robin Atthill, Christopher Hollis, Dallas Kenmare, Eric Nixon, G. Wilson Knight, Raynor D. Chapman, Hugo Manning, Maud Bodkin and John Holgate. *Wind and the Rain* is edited by Neville Braybrooke, and published occasionally, price 1s. per copy, from 15 Newton Court, London, W.8.

Windmill. The aims of this occasional publication are stated as being 'simple and traditional: to present at regular intervals a collection of points of views expressed by contemporary writers, known and unknown. We welcome in each issue a personal prejudice since reality is primarily based on known prejudices, whether for or against.' Each issue includes articles on the arts, short stories and poetry and criticism. Paintings from current exhibitions are reproduced and a feature is made of printing extracts from forthcoming novels. Contributors have included Joyce Cary, Alan Dent, George Orwell, James Hanley, Dorothy K. Haynes, Ruthven Todd, Stevie Smith, James Courage, Olaf Stapledon, Laurence Whistler, David Wright, Robert Payne and C. P. Snow. *Windmill* is edited by Edward Lane, and published occasionally, price 4s. 6d. per copy, from 99 Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

Writers of the Midlands. Aims at providing 'an independent platform for good writing by Midlanders, giving special prominence to the short story—secondly to attempt in the process to resurrect what we feel has been a failing regional consciousness.' Short stories, articles about Midland activities in the theatre, art, music, etc. Contributors have included James Kirkup, Donald Cowie, Leslie Halward, Edward Galbraith. *Writers of the Midlands* is edited by Stanley Derricourt, and published occasionally, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 25 St. Peter's Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.